

AN ASIAN ARCADY



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The Land and Peoples of Northern Siam

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Preface

SOME years ago there appeared a book on Siam called 'Lotus Land,' by Mr. P. A. Thompson, of the Royal Siamese Survey Department. That book purported to give a description of the country, customs and characteristics of Southern Siam, without reference to the Lao country in the north which lay outside the scope of the author's knowledge; and it is accounted by many critics as one of the most accurate, sympathetic and ably-written accounts of Southern Siam that has yet appeared.

The ambitious purpose of this volume is to try to provide a similar account of the country and people of Northern Siam, thus making a companion volume to 'Lotus Land,' and filling the gap which Mr. Thompson left.

I have divided the book, for convenience' sake, into three Parts, Part I, Historical; Part II, Topographical and Ethnological; and Part III, Travel.

The first Part, which sets forth the history of this little-known land for the first time in English, will be found by some, perhaps, rather heavy reading. The names and places, being new to most of my readers, are no doubt strange and difficult, and although I have tried to treat the subject as lightly as accuracy permits, I would ask all those, who are not particularly interested in history, not to allow this part to weigh too heavily upon them, but to deal as leniently with the author as they may, and to pass on to Parts II and III, in which they will surely find more congenial entertainment.

The account now given does not pretend to be complete (no such record ever can be), for the north of Siam has been subject to as great an influx of peoples as perhaps any other part of the world, and presents a wide field for study, both ethnologically and historically. But it rests upon a considerable length of residence in this country, and some years ago, when I was living in the north of Siam, it was my good fortune to travel extensively through most of the province of Bāyāp, and to see the lives of the Lao people at fairly close range. I was, as are most other folk, quickly attracted by their many delightful qualities, and I used the opportunity to gather as much information as I could regarding their history, customs and folk-lore. The results of these studies are now presented in this volume before you.

Though several years have passed since then, to me the forest still calls, and memory brings back all the varying scenes of jungle, plain, and mountain. Again I sit by the camp-fire at night by the bank of some forest stream. All the sounds of the jungle are still, but for the rippling of the water at my side and the fitful cry of some plaintive bird; and I gaze with growing awe at those skies of deep dark blue, which at night are set with myriads of gems, clustering round their central jewel.

In conclusion, I must first of all express my deep gratitude to H.R.H. Prince Purachatra of Kambaeng Bejra, Minister of Commerce and Communications, who has not only placed at my disposal a number of photographs taken by the Royal Railway Department, but, out of friendship and sympathy with my aim, has also kindly allowed me to dedicate this book to himself; which I do most heartily, knowing that there is no one in the kingdom who works with more untiring zeal on his country's behalf.

Next, I wish to express my warm thanks to all those who have helped me in the preparation of this book, especially to Mr. W. A. Graham, F.R.G.S., M.R.A.S., the author of the well-known Handbook on Siam, to Mr. W. A. R. Wood, C.I.E., H.B.M. Consul-General at Chiangmai, and to Professor G. Coedès, the Chief Librarian of the National Library, all of whom have taken the greatest interest in the work, and whose intimate knowledge of this country has enabled them to make many valuable suggestions and corrections throughout; also to the Rev. William Harris, of the American Presbyterian Mission in Chiangmai, and to Major Erik Seidenfaden, M.R.A.S., late of the Siamese Gendarmerie, who have both contributed their quota to the accuracy of the matter given; to Mr. W. A. Elder, of the Anglo-Siam Corporation, who has supplied me with the major portion of the illustrations shown; to Mr. Malchow-Möller, lately of the firm of Messrs. Swanson and Sehested, who took the beautiful photographs of the Temple at Lampāng Lūang; to Luang Thawin, a Siamese friend of mine in the Royal Railway Department, for his kindly help in preparing the two maps of Siam; to Luang Pramonda, my untiring secretary, for many interesting and critical comments; and last, but not least, to my dear wife, who painted the frontispiece to this volume, and who has given her constant help in revising the proofs. If there are any others, whose names I have inadvertently omitted, I would ask them to accept this acknowledgment of my thanks for the kindly help they have given me.



H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF KAMBAENG BEJRA.

THIS BOOK
IS
by kind permission
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO
His Royal Highness
THE PRINCE OF KAMBAENG BEJRA

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Note on the Transliteration of Siamese Words

FOR the purposes of this book, an attempt has been made to render Siamese names and places as phonetically and simply as possible in the Roman character, and thereby to make them easily intelligible to the foreign reader. The vowels and consonants used should be pronounced as in the following list:

VOWELS

ā	as in	'father'	e.g.	'Nān'
ǎ	as in	'plum'	e.g.	'Dām'
ao	as in	'cow'	e.g.	'Lao'
é	as in	'fate'	e.g.	'Théwī'
ê	as in	'hair'	e.g.	'Sên' or 'Phrê'
ī	as in	'me'	e.g.	'Théwī'
ĩ	as in	'sin'	e.g.	'Sín'
ō	as in	'moat'	e.g.	'Pōng'
ǒ	as in	'gong'	e.g.	'Kǒng'
ö	as in	'her'	e.g.	'Khôn'
ô	as in	'law'	e.g.	{ 'Nakôn' or 'Môn' or 'Hô'
ū	as in	'too'	e.g.	'Lūang'
ũ	as in	'took'	e.g.	'Chũ'
ü	as in	'ugh!' (nasal)	e.g.	'Müang'

CONSONANTS

'ph' is an aspirated 'p,' *not* 'f' (as in 'philosopher')

'th' is an aspirated 't,' *not* 'th' (as in 'thee')

'kh' is an aspirated 'k'

Note on the Name 'Lao'

IN an introductory note to Dr. McGilvary's book, 'A Half-century among the Siamese and Lao,' Professor Bradley of California, the well-known Siamese scholar, enters a well-timed protest against the pronunciation of the word 'Laos,' as applied to Northern Siam, as if it were two distinct syllables, 'Lay-oss,' a practice especially common among his own countrymen; and the author of the present volume desires to enter the lists by the side of Professor Bradley in his protest against this barbarous usage.

In the first place, the combination of the two syllables, 'Lay-oss,' has an ugly sound to the ear; and, secondly, there is no sanction or authority for such a pronunciation, either by etymology or custom.

The word 'Lao,' as applied to Northern Siam, and as written in the Siamese language, is pronounced as in the English word 'cow'; but as L-a-o is a pleasanter form of the word and also less ambiguous than L-o-w, it has been given this form in the English language. From which it follows that, if we add an 's' to this word, it does not become 'Lay-oss,' but 'Laos.'

Strictly speaking, an 's' should not be added at all. The Siamese call the country 'Müang Lao,' and the people 'Lao'; and the 's' has no doubt been added in Elizabethan and later times by ignorant adventurers and travellers, in the same way as the 'Universal History' of 1759 constantly speaks of the 'Chineses,' the 'Siameses,' the 'Peguers,' the 'Barmas' (for 'Burmas'), the 'Lanjans,' the 'Malabars,' and so on. It is true that the French have also adopted the word 'Laos' for the country which they call 'Le Laos,' but then they have adopted an entirely new form for the people whom they call 'Laotiens.' In English, at any rate, the people should be called 'Lao'; and, as far as the country is concerned, the word 'Laos,' whether pronounced 'Lay-oss' or 'Laos,' should be discarded as far as possible and 'Northern Siam' substituted. If it is desired to use the word in connection with the land, the latter may be referred to as 'the Lao country,' or, if you like it better, 'Lao-land.'

PART I
HISTORICAL

AN ASIAN ARCADY

CHAPTER I

From the Earliest Times to 1350 A.D.

RIGHT up to the beginning of the twentieth century, it may be confidently said, the greater part of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula remained a closed book to Europe generally, in spite of the colonising and development work already carried out in Malaya and Cochin-China by Britain and France respectively. This is particularly true of that region of which this book treats, for to all but a small band of Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Danes the hinterland of Siam was a veritable 'terra ignota'; and even to-day it would not be easy to collect a dozen persons in Europe who could give anything like an accurate description of the country and people of Northern Siam.

Yet that wide tract of land, slightly larger than Ireland, as represented by the two modern Siamese Circles, or Provinces, of Bāyāp and Maharashtra (pronounced Mahārāt),¹ has centuries of history to look back upon, as Ireland has, and no less stormy and bloody; and to-day contains in the main a homogeneous folk who, in spite of many vicissitudes of fortune and ultimate absorption into a larger realm, still retain in their individual persons as much charm of character as may be found in the East.

You will then ask: "Who are the peoples that have inhabited the north of Siam, and what is their history?"

The answers to these questions will carry us far afield, and much of the matter involved is still in the realm of speculation and controversy among scholars, as well it may be, seeing how scanty are the existing records of the race.

The object of this chapter, however, will be to avoid controversy wherever possible, and to describe in broad outline the history of the north of Siam as far as it is generally known and accepted to-day.

¹ In 1926 amalgamated into one Province or Circle.

The earliest known inhabitants of Siam, at least of Northern Siam, were the Lāwā, who, as successive and more virile peoples came into and occupied the country, were either absorbed by their conquerors, or were gradually scattered and took to the hills, where they are still to be found in small groups under the names of the La and Wa. In Northern Siam they are still called the Lāwā. The origin of these aboriginal folk is not yet determined, and practically nothing is known of their history, customs or government.

But the people who eventually took possession of the north of Siam, and still occupy it, spring from the ancient and well-known Tai race in China, and for many years past this particular branch of the Tai race, which is ethnologically the father of the Siamese, has been called Lao.

If we look at the map of Further India, we shall see that north of the province of Bāyāp, which extends from the Salwīn River on the west to the Mēkhōng River on the east, lie the Shan States, and north of them again the Chinese Province of Yunnan Fu, and from this we may draw the correct conclusion that the Lao is the half-way stage between the Shan and the Siamese. All three sprang originally from the same source, the Tai race, which once inhabited the present Chinese Provinces of Sze-Chuan, Kweichow, Kwang-Si, and Yunnan, but whom over-population and wars with the Chinese—and latterly the Mongol wars of conquest—drove out of China to the south. As they came down, some went south-eastward down the valley of the Mēkhōng; others went south and south-westwards into the Shan States and the Salwīn valley; the latter being the first to settle abroad were called 'Tai Lōng' (Lūang) or 'Greater Tai'; the former, being later comers, were named 'Tai Noi,' i.e. 'Lesser Tai.' As you may imagine, many external influences from varying sources were brought to bear upon the different tribes as some journeyed further south than others, so that to-day they present widely divergent characteristics, and it would be almost impossible to mistake a Shan for a Siamese, or *vice versa*. As the race went further south and nearer the equator, its stature became less and its complexion darker, so that whereas the Shan are now on the whole a fair-skinned race, the Lao, who occupy the north of Siam, are less so, while the Siamese are a good deal darker; and again, whereas the Shan are only slightly less tall than the Chinese, the Siamese, on the whole, are small of stature. Yet the Siamese have benefited in other ways, for they have acquired more refinement than the Shan and the Lao, and have shown themselves more adaptable

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to the forces of modern civilisation. Strangely enough, after all these centuries, many of the customs of both the Siamese and Shan are still akin, and a very large number of words in both languages are still almost identical, such as 'nām' for water, and 'khām' for gold.¹

While recently travelling in Upper Burma, I met the son of a ruling Shan Chief, and we spent an interesting hour comparing the two languages. Except for some slight vocal transformations of consonants, nearly all the simple words mentioned were identical in both. The difference between the two is, in fact, one of dialect, not of language.

But the Lao is naturally still more akin to the Shan, for he is nearer the source of all three branches, and has felt none of the Khmer (Cambodian) influence which played so great a part in moulding the Tai race after it had settled in what is now Siam Proper. On the other hand, the chief influence in the North of Siam, both before and since it was peopled by the Tai, has undoubtedly been exercised by the Môn and the Burmese, whose kings waged many wars, successful and otherwise, against the Lao princes right up to the end of the eighteenth century.

Thus we can see good reasons for the present differences between the inhabitants of Siam Proper and their relatives of the North. And these differences become all the more apparent when we add another good reason, namely, the configuration of the land itself. To the south of Pitsanulōk the whole country is practically one vast rolling plain (I am not speaking now of the high eastern plateau of Siam), which is watered by the river Menam Chao Phya, and where rice can be grown by a mere scratching of the earth; and this plain must have seemed the 'Promised Land' to tribes coming from the mountainous and thickly-wooded north. The end of the plain became a sharp dividing line between the two countries, and those who had reached the south never wished to travel north again. The North of Siam in fact remained a congeries of principalities, at first free, and then vassals of Burma, until it was incorporated in the Siamese Kingdom in the latter half of the nineteenth

¹ In the Siamese language now the Shan are called 'Nglo,' the derivation of which is obscure; the northerners are called 'Lao,' and the Siamese 'T'hai' or 'free'. It is not yet fully agreed whether this word is the same as the word 'Tai,' which was the name of the race while still in China, and is used in this book in such.

Since the Lao and the T'hai have become unified into one kingdom, the Government would naturally prefer to discard the name 'Lao,' since all are of the same race, and call the northerners 'T'hai nūa,' or 'Northern T'hai'; but as we are dealing ethnologically in this volume with the

century. The country lent itself to this division, as its contour is a series of ranges of hills running south and north, with fertile valleys between.

The history of the Tai race, previous to the founding of Ayudhya (the capital of Siam Proper) in 1350 A.D.¹ on the ruins of the ancient and famous Khmer (Cambodian) Empire, or, at any rate, previous to the reign of King Rām Khamhêng of Sukhōthai (A.D. 1275), is largely shrouded in mystery; but all students of Indo-China have been laid under a great obligation to His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, formerly Minister of the Interior and one of the makers of Modern Siam, as well as a well-known writer on Siamese history, who has, in the preface to his edition of the Royal Autograph version of the History of the Ayudhya period, endeavoured to bring together all the known facts relating to the history of this country before that date.

From the facts thus gathered together it appears that the origin of the Tai race does not admit of doubt, since there are still in Southern China many tribes who speak a Tai language, and who may be recognised as members of the original Tai stock. In fact, the late Dr. Dodd of the American Presbyterian Mission at Chieng Rai, in Northern Siam, who was conversant with the Lao form of Siamese, and who visited these tribes, has testified to the fact that he had but little difficulty in making himself easily understood.

In his book, 'The Tai Race,' Dr. Dodd goes so far as to maintain that the Tai were inhabiting Southern and Central China before the Chinese themselves came into those regions. He takes us back to 2200 B.C. and quotes Professor Terrien de Lacouperie in support of the statement that the Great Mung (? Mūng) are mentioned in the Chinese Annals of that early period, and that these same Mung "formed the leading family in the agglomeration of tribes which united to form the

¹ I have, in nearly every case, translated all dates into the Christian era for the sake of convenience.

The eras in use in Siam at various times have been of three kinds, namely (1) the Buddhist Era, which dates from the *death*, or 'Maha Pari-Nirvana' of Gautama in 543 B.C., in contradistinction to the Christian Era, which dates from the *birth* of Christ; (2) The 'Mahā Sākārāt,' or 'Great Era,' which corresponds with the Saka Era of India, generally identified with Kanishka, the Kushan, and which began in 78 A.D. It was no doubt introduced into Siam by Brahmin priests, and was in general use at Sukhōthai in the thirteenth century A.D.; (3) The 'Chūlā Sākārāt,' or 'Little Era,' which dates from 638 A.D., and was introduced into Siam from Burma (where it was the old Civil Era), it is believed, in the sixteenth century A.D. The use of this in Siam only ceased in 1889 A.D. on the introduction of the 'Rātānākōsin' Era by King Chulalongkorn, who wished to establish an era dating from the foundation of Bangkok in 1782 A.D. This era only lasted for 21 years.



A VIEW FROM THE CHIENGMAI HILL, DOI SUTHÉP.

well-known and powerful Tai Kingdom at Tali Fu, Yunnan Province, in the seventh century, A.D."

Dr. Dodd bases his contention on the fact that in the early Chinese Annals these Mung people are called 'Great,' and deduces from this that the Chinese would not call any other people 'great,' unless they had been in possession of their territory for a long time and had raised themselves to a State of importance.

This may possibly be true, and there is now a good deal of evidence to show that the Tai (or Ai Lao) race comes of very ancient stock in China, but it is a far cry from 700 A.D. to 2200 B.C., and so much *must* be conjectural, that I am not prepared to follow Dr. Dodd thither.

But Dr. Dodd makes an interesting point when he says that 'it is not only possible, but it is probable, that the Tai race called themselves 'Lao' from the earliest times, for this word 'Lao' in their language originally meant 'man' or 'person,' and I discovered its use in this archaic sense during my journey among the illiterate Tai in China, who use many words in a sense lost or discredited among their literate brethren.'" In this opinion he is supported by Graham and Gerini, both well-known writers on Siam, who also believe that the racial name of the Tai was 'Lao' or 'Ai-Lao.' Another curious and interesting fact is that the Chinese in mediaeval times called the country south of themselves 'Hsien-Lō,' though this is said, on good authority, to refer to the united kingdoms of Syam (Sukhothai) and Lo (Louvo, or Lopburi). Still Louvo itself may possibly be a corruption of Lao.

But, whether they originally called themselves 'Lao' or not, it is now known that the Tai, who were formerly split up into a number of independent States, were later on united under a ruler named Hsi Nu Lo about the year 650 A.D., and that his Kingdom was called by the Chinese 'Nān Chao,' or 'The country of the Southern Lord.' The capital, after being at a small unimportant place, was later established at Tali Fu in Yunnan, and many wars were waged against the Chinese and Thibetans. Details of these wars are given in 'The 24 Dynastic Histories of China' up to the year 881 A.D., after which date no further account of 'Nān Chao' is recorded. But it is recorded in other works that the family of Hsi Nu Lo reigned for thirteen generations covering a period of 255 years, which brings us up to the beginning of the tenth century.

It would seem that after that time the customs of the country became more and more assimilated to those of China, owing to

the continual influx of Chinese settlers; and eventually about the middle of the thirteenth century, when the Mongols, first under Genghis and then under Kublai Khan, overran China, they included the original Tai country in their conquests, at the same time as Burma was subdued.

But, although 'The 24 Dynastic Histories of China' are silent as to Nān Chao after the ninth century A.D., Dr. Dodd holds that it is beyond dispute that that Kingdom was then approaching its zenith, and that the Tai were in control of the whole region south of the Yangtze river until 1053 A.D., in which year, after a long series of battles along the course of the West River, the city of Canton was lost to the Chinese. Even after that defeat, the Tai Kingdom continued in China for nearly two hundred years more, until the year 1234 A.D., when it was overthrown by the Mongol hosts. This year marked the end of autonomous rule by the Tai race in Chinese territory.

In the meantime, long before this event happened, and probably long before the Kingdom of Nān Chao was founded, the Tai had begun to emigrate, south, south-west and south-east.

In the 'History of Yōnākā'¹ (the Standard History of the North of Siam), to which reference will be made again frequently later on, it is stated that, many years before the Christian era dawned, bands of Tai emigrants had crossed over into the valley of the Salwīn (and no doubt into the valley of the Mēkhōng as well), and had set up small independent principalities in what was then 'no man's land,' as the 'Sip-sōng Pān Nā' (or 'Twelve Territorial Divisions')²—a region to the north-east of Siam—remains to-day, though nominally subject to Pekin. Good authority can be found for this, for even in Arakan (in Burma), and in Assam, descendants of a Tai population still exist at the present day.

The first migration of the Tai family out of China southwards is said to have taken place during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., when the States of Muang Nai (Moné), Hsenwi, and Hsipaw were founded, the first in what are now the Southern, and the two latter in the Northern, Shan States. The second migration occurred apparently at the end of the fourth century B.C., about the time of Alexander's campaign in India, and the third migration in 78 A.D., when, according to Lacouperie, "The King of

¹ Yōnākā means 'Foreigner,' and is a Pali word borrowed from India, where Greece was also called Yōnākā.

² This is usually translated as 'Twelve Thousand Fields,' but I do not think it can have that meaning. The Tai do not say 'sip sōng pān' for 'twelve thousand,' but 'mūn sōng pān.' The word 'pān' is probably short for 'bēng pān,' i.e. 'to divide.' This agrees with 'sip sōng chū tai.'

the Ai Lao, Lei Lao by name, was defeated by the Chinese in a great battle, which caused many of their tribes to migrate into the present country of the Northern Shan States."

A fourth migration took place about 350 A.D. as the result of further oppression by the Chinese, but from the seventh century onwards until the eleventh the Tai race were left in undisturbed possession of their home in Southern China.

About the year 250 A.D. an independent Tai State¹ is said to have been set up in the Salwin district at Mûang Phong (now Mûang Hăng Lûang), while the emigrants into the valley of the Mêkhông also established independent States in a region still called 'Sip-Sông Chũ Tai' (Twelve Tai Chiefs). Subsequently, at a date unknown, a King Parama (the first name to appear) united the Mêkhông States into one, and set up his Capital at Mûang Thêng. It is from these two branches that the names of 'Tai Yai' and 'Tai Noi' have sprung, the former name being given to the Salwin branch, and the latter to that in the Mêkhông valley.

According to the chronicles of Wieng-Chăn, with which the 'History of Yōnākā' agrees, King Parama extended the frontier of his Kingdom as far south as the district of Mûang Sua or Javā (now Lûang Prabāng), and from that time the Tai continued increasingly to found settlements in the south until about the year 860 A.D. a strong Tai Prince, named Brahma, pushed his way so far south that he crossed the river Mêkhông and founded the first Tai settlement on its western bank at Chai Prākā, in the district of Chieng Rai, that is to say, in what is now the Siamese Province of Băyăp.

Now at this time the greater part of modern Siam, i.e. Central and Eastern Siam, as well as a portion of the Malay Peninsula, formed part of the mighty Khmer empire, which had its Capital at Angkor Thom in the heart of Cambodia and was ruled by Jayavarman II, the eighth of a line of Kings of Indian origin, who is stated by Aymonier to have built the stone temple at Angkor Thom (not to be confused with Angkor Wat) about the year 857 A.D.

The legendary 'Annals of the North' state that the first city of any importance to be founded in Northern Siam was 'Hariphūn Chai' (the present Lamphūn) about the year 660 A.D., and that its first Queen was a Cambodian Princess named Chām Thēwi, the daughter of the Cambodian Ruler of Lăwō (the modern Lopburi in Central Siam), which was then

¹ Harvey ('History of Burma,' p. 322) says this is probably mythical.

the seat of Government of Siam Proper.¹ It is not clear whether at this early date Lăwō was supposed to be the Capital of an independent Khmer State, or whether it was the seat of a Viceroy, acting on behalf of the Khmer Emperor at Angkor Thom.

But in either case the Northern Annals are, it is thought, incorrect, and it is almost certain that, even if it may be accepted that Lamphūn was founded about the seventh century, the Khmer empire had not yet then reached the city of Lăwō, and the Princess Chām Thēwi was not the daughter of a Cambodian ruler.

In the first place there is no evidence of Khmer civilisation in the north of Siam, i.e. the present Circle of Bāyāp; and secondly, there has recently been found at Sān Sūng, near Lopburi (Lăwō), a stone inscription which dates back to the eighth century and which is written in the Môn character. Moreover, in Wat Benchama Bopitr, in Bangkok, there is now a stone image of the Buddha, which dates back to the same period, and has also an inscription in Môn.

Further, in the middle of the eleventh century there was a serious cholera epidemic in Lamphūn, and a large proportion of its population fled to Sudharmaraja (i.e. Thatôn) in Lower Burma, afterwards removing to Hongsāwadi (Pegu) on account of ill-treatment at the hands of the Burmese King of Pagan (probably the famous Anuruddha). Now no less than seven inscriptions in the Môn language have been discovered in or near Lamphūn, and this language is found to have been identical with that used in Hongsāwadi. It is stated that many of the emigrants and their descendants afterwards found their way back to Lamphūn.

During the seventh, eighth and part of the ninth centuries Lăwō (Lopburi) was then a Môn kingdom, but in the latter century was conquered by the Khmer, and this explains the wars which subsequently took place between Lăwō and Lamphūn.

These facts have only recently been brought to light by Professor Coedès, the Chief Librarian of the National Library of Siam, a most careful and exact scholar, who has taken much pains to translate the Pali text of the Chronicle called 'Jinakala Malini,' which was written by a monk of Chiangmai about the year 1516 A.D., and which Professor Coedès considers to have been compiled with care by a trained and learned man, and therefore worthy of greater consideration than most of the 'fantaisies' that pass for history in this part of the world.

¹ See Appendix for legend of Chām Thēwi.



The Earliest Times to 1350 A.D. 11

The chronicle named treats of the life of Buddha, and the spread of Buddhism in India, Ceylon, and Indo-China; and also gives a narrative of the history of Chiengmai down to the year 1516 A.D.

In the meantime, from the year 850 A.D. the Tai began gradually to advance southwards into Siam Proper and to settle in the valley of the Menam Chao Phya, which was probably about that time falling under Khmer sovereignty. About the year 1050 A.D. the famous Anuruddha, King of Pagan in Burma, advanced against the Khmer in Siam and overthrew them; but Prince Damrong thinks that this conquest was of very short duration, and that, soon after Anuruddha's death, bands of Tai coming from the north and joining those already in Central Siam, succeeded in overcoming both the Burmese from Pagan and the Khmer, thus preparing the way, first for the Kingdom of Sukhōthai-Sawankalōk, and eventually for the founding of the Siamese Kingdom with its Capital at Ayudhya in the year 1350 A.D.

To return now to the North.

About the same time as the conquest of the Khmer by King Anuruddha of Pagan, the Lăwā had set up an independent State at Chieng-Sên (in the extreme north of Siam on the Mēkhōng), and had founded a dynasty under a King named Lao Chōk, or, as he is more decorously described in the Pali manuscripts, Lava Chakkaraja. This Prince had many successors, whose territory extended over the northern portion of Bāyāp, and who continued to rule until about the thirteenth century, when the Tai became too strong for them, and a number of powerful chiefs arose, who established independent States of their own and scattered the remnants of the Lăwā away into the hills, where they have remained ever since. From this time, and for many centuries afterwards, the province of Bāyāp became known as 'Lān Nā Tai,' or 'the million Tai fields,'¹ as it is usually translated, and history becomes more articulate.

It appears reasonably certain that round about the middle of the thirteenth century the district of 'Lān Nā Tai' was split up into a number of small States, independent of each other, of which the three principal ones were (1) Hariphūn Chai (Lamphūn), under Môn rule; (2) Ngōn Yāng (Chieng-Sên); and (3) Phayao (Pānyao), under Tai. This is a famous period

¹ This is a most uncertain rendering of 'Lān Nā Tai.' In Siamese the word 'Lān' in 'Lān Nā Tai' is written without the 'mai to' accent, which gives it the meaning of 'million.' The word 'Lān' in Siamese, when alone, means 'courtyard,' or, if coupled with 'nā,' means 'threshing-floor.'

in the history of the North of Siam, since, according to the chronicles, the year 1238 A.D. saw the birth of two of its most famous sons, Phya Meng Rai, afterwards King of Chieng Sên and the founder of Chiengmai, who was born on the ninth day of the waning moon of the third month, and Phya Ngām Mûang, afterwards King of Phayao, who was born on the 15th day of the waxing moon of the sixth month. These two figures stand out prominently in the annals of the country, but before treating of them further, let us see what was going on in the region to the south, where the mountains end and the plains begin, since stirring events were taking place in the district of Sukhōthai, which were to have a profound influence upon the whole country, both north and south.

In his graphic work, 'Siam,' W. A. Graham carries the birth of Sukhōthai back to 300 B.C., when, he states, a settlement was formed there by Môn-Khmer tribesmen at a spot on the river Mê Yom about 200 miles north of Bangkok. From these early beginnings gradually grew up the powerful Sukhōthai-Sachanalai (Sawankalōk) Kingdom, which eventually embraced all lower and central Siam, as well as the northern provinces of Nān and Phrê. These early settlers belonged to a Brahman sect, and, as the kingdom grew in strength, its monarchs, claiming Kshatriya descent, surrounded themselves with the ancient Brahman ceremonial of India, and spent their time in waging war upon the princes of neighbouring States. Also trade gradually became extensive, and friendly relations were maintained with the great Empire of China, whose ambassadors, visiting Sukhōthai early in the seventh century, reported the country to be rich and powerful.

It cannot be said that authority for this picture is strong, since the records left are of very doubtful value, but whatever the origin of Sukhōthai may have been, it is clear, from the style of Brahman-Buddhist architecture still to be seen at Sachanalai (Sawankalōk), especially at the great temple of 'Māhā Tāt,' that the Khmer had pushed their influence as far north as this city; and in all probability the ruler of Sukhōthai-Sachanalai had been a vassal, real or imaginary, of the Khmer Emperor for a number of years previous to the time of which we now must speak.

At the time of the birth of Phya Meng Rai and Phya Ngām Mûang, i.e. about the year 1238 A.D., the local Princes of Sukhōthai-Sachanalai were beginning to throw off the Khmer yoke—the great Empire was by this time tottering to its fall—and the hero of Siamese history, Phra Rūang, had been born.

The Earliest Times to 1350 A.D. 13

All the independent Kings of Sukhōthai—and there were five of them—are called Phra Rūang in Siamese history, but undoubtedly the *great* Phra Rūang was the famous Rām Khămhêng of the stone inscription, which was discovered a number of years ago at Sukhōthai and brought to Bangkok, where it now rests in the National Library.

His father, Khun Sri Indraditya, so it is recorded, fled from the Khmer Court of Lăwō and made himself King of Sukhōthai; and, according to the inscription, Rām Khamhêng, the youngest of three sons, having overcome the Lord of Mūang Chôt, who was one of his father's avowed enemies, in single encounter on elephant back after the fortunes of the day had seemed to be going against him, established his reputation as an intrepid leader, and eventually succeeded to the throne on the death of his two elder brothers. From the records available, this event must have taken place between the years 1270 and 1280 A.D.

King Rām Khamhêng proved himself to be a very powerful monarch, and extended the frontiers of his Kingdom to hitherto undreamt of limits. The stone inscription, which bears the date of 1214 of the old Saka era, then in use in Sukhōthai, i.e. equivalent to 1292 A.D., sets forth clearly the extent of his dominions, which included the States of Phrê and Nān and Lūang Prabāng to the north and north-east; all the country to the east as far as Wieng Chan and Wieng Kham on the Měkhōng; south as far as Nakôn Săwăn, Rajaburi, Petchaburi, Nakôn Sri Thămmarāt and the country stretching to the outer sea; and on the west as far as Mūang Chôt (Mê Sôt), and probably Tennnaserim, Tavoy, Martaban and Mergui on the Bay of Bengal.

Thus in about 20 years or less Rām Khămhêng had succeeded in consolidating a great portion of modern Siam under one State and one King, a task which was no doubt helped by the vanishing power of the Khmer sovereignty, but which at the same time must bespeak a high-minded brain and a strong right arm. Unfortunately, like so many such dynasties of the East, it did not endure for long after this bright light had gone out, and we find about fifty years later that the power of Sukhōthai was already on the wane, and that another dynasty, formerly subject to Sukhōthai, namely, that of U Thong (the present Suphanburi) had already not only established its independence, but had actually founded the Capital of its Kingdom at Ayudhya — a Capital and a Dynasty destined to rule over Central and Lower Siam for the next 400 years and more.

But Rām Khămhêng will always live in Siamese hearts, if

for one reason only, since in the stone inscription already mentioned, which has now been fully deciphered, he claims to be *writing* the Siamese language for the first time. There is little doubt that, in forming the characters (if he actually did so), he was inspired by the Cambodian alphabet, but still the claim remains, I think, unique in the annals of the world. A curious point about this inscription is that all the characters, both consonants and vowels, are written on the same line; but this custom only prevailed for a short time, and a few years afterwards we find, in other inscriptions of the same Dynasty, many of the vowels written above or below the consonants, as the language has remained to this day.

I have heard it remarked by a philologist that the development of the language has been seriously retarded by this seemingly insignificant change.

But Rām Khămhêng is germane to our theme, for it will be perhaps noticed that in the account given of his dominions, no mention is made of 'Lān Nā Tai'; and the fact is that this region, split up into a number of principalities, never became subject to Sukhōthai-Sachanalai, and that the chief of these northern princes, notably Meng Rai and Ngām Mūang, were on terms of equality and friendship with their contemporary, Rām Khămhêng.

Meng Rai, who succeeded his father Lao Meng as King of Chieng-Sên in A.D. 1259, soon after his accession left that city to found his capital at Chieng Rai, which he named after himself. According to the 'History of Yōnākā,' he then captured the city of Chieng Khong from the Lăwā, and later on subdued Haripūn Chai (Lamphūn).

Owing to this extension of his dominions, he did not long remain satisfied with the surroundings of Chieng Rai for his capital city, and it is on reliable record that in the year of the monkey, 658 of the Chula era (A.D. 1296), after many years' preparation, Phya Meng Rai founded the city of Chiengmai, which is now, and has been for many years past, the principal city of Northern Siam. For this purpose the records state that he invited Phra Rūang (Rām Khămhêng) and Phya Ngām Mūang (the Chief of Phayao) to assist him in choosing a site. King Meng Rai died in the year 1317 A.D., and was succeeded by his son, Phra Chai Songkrām, who entrusted the Government of Chiengmai to his eldest son, and himself retired to Chieng Rai once more. Phra Chai Songkrām died in 1327 A.D. (the same year as Edward II was put to death), after a short reign of 10 years, to be followed by Chao Sên Phū, who also only reigned



A VIEW FROM THE RAILWAY IN NORTHERN SIAM.

The Earliest Times to 1350 A.D. 15

a few years, dying in 1334, but who rebuilt the city of Chieng Sên and made it his capital. Chao Sên Phū was succeeded by his son Khăm Fū, who also lived at Chieng Sên, leaving Chiengmai in the hands of his son, Phā Yū. In the year of the Dragon, 707 of the Chula Era (A.D. 1345), Khăm Fū died, and Phā Yū became king. The latter reigned at Chieng-Sên until 1350, and then returned to Chiengmai, which he restored as the Capital of his Kingdom, and where he reigned until his death in 1367 at the age of 57.

As regards the independent State of Phayao, the 'History of Yōnākā' records that Phya Ngām Mūang was on terms of friendship with Phra Rūang (Rām Khămhêng) of Sukhōthai; that the two studied together under the same teachers and resembled one another in possessing miraculous attributes. It is said that Rām Khămhêng paid frequent visits to Ngām Mūang at Phayao, and finally, on one of these visits, seduced the latter's Queen. When the intrigue was discovered, Ngām Mūang became naturally incensed, but, probably through fear of Rām Khămhêng's power, eventually called in Phya Meng Rai to act as arbitrator. Phya Meng Rai was able at length to reconcile Rām Khămhêng with the aggrieved husband, and the three Princes thereupon swore an oath of friendship and peace. The fate of the lady is not recorded, but may be imagined.

After Phya Ngām Mūang had been followed by two successors, this State was absorbed into the kingdom of 'Lān Nā Tai,' and its existence as a separate State ceased.

The above facts are interesting, as they show how the whole country began to be settled into two distinct States at just about the same time, i.e. 1350 A.D., King Phā Yū settling the capital of 'Lān Nā Tai' at Chiengmai, and King U Thong founding the capital of Siam at Ayudhya (now called in Siamese 'Krung Kao' or 'the old Capital').

Before continuing our story of the north of Siam, and in order to make our attendant history of this country complete, we must now touch briefly on King U Thong and how he came to be the progenitor of modern Siam.

The 'History of Yōnākā' states that towards the close of the twelfth century there was still a descendant of King Brahma, the first to found a Tai settlement in northern Siam, ruling at Chai Prakā in the north of Bāyăp. This Chief, whose name was Chai Çiri, was attacked by the Môn King of Sittaung, and not being able to resist him, fled from his capital southwards and established a new capital on the site of a deserted city near the

Traitrúng. Chai Çiri and his descendants were left undisturbed in the possession of their new territory, and continued to rule over this city until U Thong was born some 120 years or more later. U Thong, who was given the name because he lay in a 'golden cradle,' is said not to have been in the direct line, but the son of a daughter of the King of Traitrúng by a commoner, who was driven out of the city with the Princess and child on the discovery of the liaison through the birth of U Thong, and who founded another city of Tép Nakôn, which cannot be identified now. This ruler, who took the name of Çiri Chai Chieng-Sên, reigned for 25 years, and the kingdom then passed to U Thong, his son, in the year 1344 A.D.

Prince Damrong thinks this story erroneous, however, and for many reasons considers that the forebears of King U Thong established themselves first at Nakôn Pathom, and that it was from this latter city that U Thong's family, or he himself, removed first to Suphanburi, and afterwards to Ayudhya.

He points out that the ancient name for Nakôn Pathom, which is probably the oldest city in Siam, was Chai Çiri or Çiri Chai, which corresponds with the name given to U Thong's ancestor; and that U Thong, which means 'the source of gold,' corresponds with the Pali name of 'Suvarabhūmi,' which also means 'the source, or land of gold,' and which was the ancient name of a city near the modern Suphanburi (the Siamese equivalent for Suvarabhūmi), ruled over originally by King U Thong.

He also points out that from the thirteenth century onwards the district round Kamphēngphet was under the control of the Kings of Sukhōthai, who would scarcely have brooked an independent ruler so close by.

Prince Damrong therefore considers that the ancient chronicles confused the names of the Kings with those of the places in which they settled, and that, although the ancestors of U Thong may well have been Tai from the North, they first of all set up their capital in the South on the site of the ancient city of Çiri Chai (or Nakôn Pathom), which had been sacked by King Anuruddha of Pagan in the middle of the eleventh century, and had since lain deserted.

From this place they later moved to Suphanburi, and it was from the latter city that King U Thong in the year 1350, in the sixth year of his reign, seeing that the power of the Sukhōthai Kingdom was on the wane, finally decided to make a bid for the sovereignty of the whole of Siam Proper and to transfer his capital to a more central position.

The Earliest Times to 1350 A.D. 17

From this time the Khmer empire ceased to hold any sway over the country now called Siam, and towards the end of the fourteenth century was given the 'coup de grâce,' when the empire itself was invaded by the Siamese, its capital, Angkor Thom, sacked, and thousands of prisoners carried off to slavery in Ayudhya.

This is not to say that the Cambodians left no influence behind. At the time of the founding of Ayudhya they had been for centuries a highly civilised and cultured race. Their vast temple at Angkor is to-day one of the wonders of the world. No doubt, like other proud races before them, they had grown effete and degenerate through luxury, and had therefore fallen a prey to wilder and less cultured peoples, just as Rome fell in her day; but their monuments and their arts remained, and by intermarriage and other means they could not fail to leave a permanent influence upon the Tai.

From this time also, or more probably from the founding of the Sukhōthai kingdom, a sharp division began to be set between the Tai of the South and those of the North. As was inevitable, a struggle for supremacy soon began, which lasted for two centuries, but the north of Siam managed to retain its independence until it was overrun by the Môn and Burmese in the middle of the sixteenth century. From this time until the year 1774 it remained a vassal state of Burma, but after the Burmese yoke had been finally thrown off with the aid of Southern Siamese troops, it gradually fell under the influence of Bangkok, until it was finally incorporated in the Siamese kingdom towards the close of the nineteenth century. But, although the language spoken in the north may be called a provincial form of Siamese, the written language is still different, being formed from an ancient Môn script.

CHAPTER II

From 1350 A.D. to the Present Day

IN the last chapter we had brought the history of the North down to the time when King Phā Yū had settled his capital at Chiengmai, and the Kingdom of Siam had been founded by King U Thong with its capital at Ayudhya, in 1350 A.D.

The present chapter, in which the narrative will be brought down to the present day, is drawn directly and almost exclusively from 'The History of Yōnākā,'¹ which is considered by most authorities to have been carefully compiled, and to be a sober, reliable presentation in Siamese of what facts are known.

The dates quoted usually agree with those given in the Burmese Chronicles, though not with the later Siamese histories, which, however, are largely fictitious, and were compiled after the founding of Bangkok. But in any case the discrepancies which occur are of little importance, since nowadays dates, though recognised as having a natural value, fortunately do not command that awe-inspiring worship that they did in my schooldays.

And what of the next four hundred and fifty years in Lān Nā Tai? Alas, the tale is of nothing but war, conquest, rebellion, repeated almost *ad infinitum*, with Burma, Siam, and China all struggling for supremacy over it in turn, and Chiengmai in the centre, facing now this way and now that, bravely and magnificently fighting for its independence.

It speaks indeed volumes for the heroic endurance of the Lao, when it is said that the family of Meng Rai reigned in Chiengmai (or Chieng Sên, or Chieng Rai, as the case might be), for 260 years, in fact, down to the time when the famous King Bureng² Naung of Hongswādi (Pegu) overran the whole of Northern Siam and brought it under the sway of Burma in 1558.

At times the history quaintly remarks on the passage of some comet or meteor, or other aerial phenomenon, and how it was always regarded as an omen of evil import; but, if the records of the country are true, there must have been a continual blaze of fireworks in the sky, and the passage of comets a matter of

¹ 'Phongsāwadān Yōnākā,' by Phya Prajakich Korachakr (Jēm Bunnag).

² See Harvey ('History of Burma'), where his name is given as 'Bayinnaung.'



TRAIN PASSING ALONG THE RAPIDS BETWEEN PHRÉ AND LAMPĀNG.

monthly occurrence. Except for the fact that, now and again, a year of drought and of scarcity is mentioned, we are not told how the 'rātsādôn,' or common folk, fared; but we know that they were at the constant call of their local Chief, who was lord of life and death over each and all, and we can well imagine how they must have heartily cursed those chiefs and longed to be left alone, to till their land and weave their cloth in peace, instead of being continually forced into the battle-field, often to serve some purely private, selfish end. For instance, there was a famous 'Emerald' Buddha (the one now in the Royal Temple at Bangkok), which seems to have been a source of friction and war from early times, through an uncontrollable desire on the part of successive Chiefs to possess it.

After Phā Yū's death in 1367, his son Kū Nā became King, and it is on record that in his reign the Sinhalese form of Buddhism was first introduced into Chiengmai.

Kū Nā was succeeded in 1386 by his son, Sên Mūang Mā,¹ then a young man of 23 years old, and so called because many Chiefs came to his 'christening,' who managed to keep the reins of government until his death in 1411. He had, however, to fight for the throne, as on his father's death, his uncle, who was Governor of Chiengsên, rebelled and attacked Chiengmai, no doubt on account of his nephew's youth. But the uncle was signally defeated and fled to Ayudhya, to seek the protection of Boromaraja I, the King of Siam.

He then proceeded, with the aid of a Siamese army, to attack Lampāng, about 1387 or 1388, but was defeated again and had to retire to Ayudhya. In spite of this, he afterwards returned to Chiengmai, was pardoned by Sên Mūang Mā, and restored to be Governor of Chieng Rai.

After the death of Sên Mūang Mā in 1411, his son, Sām Fāng Kén, was chosen King, but he also had to fight for his title, for his elder brother, who was Governor of Chieng Rai at that time, incensed at being passed over, at once marched against Chiengmai. He in his turn was defeated, but this time he fled to Sukhōthai (then a vassal State of Ayudhya). There he was able to persuade Prince Sai Lū Thai of the justice of his claim, and to send an army to attack the northerners on his behalf.

The Sukhōthai army first of all invested Phayao, but they did not succeed in taking it, and finally when the two armies faced one another nearer Chiengmai, the matter was settled,

¹ Lit. 'a hundred thousand cities came.'

as often in mediaeval Europe, by single combat between the champions of either side. After a long and arduous struggle, the Chiengmai champion won, and the Prince of Sukhōthai withdrew.

No sooner was the King of Chiengmai free from this danger, when he was beset by another from the north. Alleging that Chiengmai was their vassal state, the Hô of Southern China sent an embassy to demand tribute; but by this time Sām Făng Kén was beginning to feel a little stronger than his predecessors, and refused to listen to their demand, saying that the payment of this tribute had ceased from the time of his grandfather, Kū Na. In 1422, therefore, the Prince of the Hô left his territory with a considerable force and marched on Chieng Sên, with a view to reducing Sām Făng Kén to submission.

The Hô met with unexpected resistance, however, from this outpost of the Chiengmai Kingdom, and were compelled to retire in confusion. Once again, in 1425, an attempt was made by the Hô to capture Chieng Sên, but it is recorded that a miraculous tempest intervened on behalf of the Lao and destroyed the Hô army utterly. After this the Hô claimed tribute no more, and the Chief of Chieng Tung, to the north of Chieng Sên, made a pact with the Governor of the latter city, by which the boundaries of their respective Provinces were definitely fixed.

In 1442 Chao Lok, the sixth son of Sām Făng Kén, ambushed and captured his father, and compelled him to abdicate in his favour. He then took the name of Sūthăm Tilōkarāt, and was crowned King of Chiengmai, at the age of 34.

Whatever his reasons for deposing his father, whether they were personal or patriotic, there is no doubt that Tilōkarāt was a remarkable man, and deserves a conspicuous niche in the Temple of Fame which records the history of Chiengmai.

History tells us that the father was imprisoned but rescued by his other son, who was Governor of Mūang Făng, and who unsuccessfully attacked Chiengmai on his father's (or his own) behalf. This may be true, but, in any case, Tilōkarāt made no attempt to assassinate his father, as was usual in those early, savage times, but merely banished him; and when the latter died five years later, his son built a great Temple and Pagoda at Chiengmai in his honour, Wat Pā Deng Lūang, and went into the priesthood for a year, handing over the duties of government to his mother. It is clear, then, that Tilōkarāt was not actuated by a mere desire to get rid of his father; and I am inclined to think that he foresaw the long and arduous struggle

which was soon to come with Ayudhya, and knew that his father would be unequal to it. With this in his mind, he seized the reins of government at an opportune moment, and for forty-five years maintained the independence of his kingdom against all comers.

During the previous reigns Ayudhya, or one of its vassal States, had made certain ineffectual attempts to punish Chieng-mai, but it was always at someone else's request, and usually carried out in rather a half-hearted fashion. But in this reign the first serious attempts were made to reduce Chiengmai to a state of vassalage, and to bring the north of Siam within the orbit of Ayudhya's dominion.

When Tilōkarāt's brother attacked him on his father's behalf and was defeated, both he and Sām Fǎng Kén fled to Thōng, then a small State to the south-east of Chieng Rai, and still existing as a fair-sized village. The Chief of Thōng took up the cause of Sām Fǎng Kén and appealed to Ayudhya for help on his behalf. The King of Ayudhya (Phra Boromaraja II) at once seized the occasion offered and sent an army against Chiengmai; but the general chosen by Tilōkarāt, Lōka Sām Lān, boldly took up his position outside Lamphūn and suddenly fell on the Siamese army in the middle of the night. Meanwhile the Chief of Thōng had been ordered to fight in the ranks of Lōka Sām Lān, and the latter, when he discovered that that Chief had been the cause of the war, had him instantly killed and the traitor's head thrown into the enemy's camp. The result of the battle was never in doubt. The Southern army was put to complete rout, and Lōka Sām Lān pursued them to the foot of Doi Pākō.

The following year, 1443, the Chief of Nān, which was not a dependency of Chiengmai, played a trick on the King of the latter State, which cost him dear, and which at this period of time appears inexplicable. He sent an urgent call to Chiengmai for help against the Yuan (Annamites) who, he said, were attacking his city in great numbers; but when the King of Chiengmai at once responded to the call and sent a considerable force to relieve him, the urgent call was discovered to be a mere hoax or practical joke, and there was no Yuan army to be seen. Tilōkarāt was so enraged that he sent a stronger force still, which besieged and captured Nān, whose Chief fled to Ayudhya. At the same time another force was sent to invest Phrê, as the result of which the Chief of Phrê eventually submitted his city to the control of Chiengmai. Thus for the first time, Nān and Phrê, which had for some time been under the shadowy sovereignty of Ayudhya, came under the ægis of Chiengmai.

Nān was afterwards besieged by a force from Lūang Prabāng, but without success.

In 1451 a fresh war broke out between Chiengmai and Ayudhya, but most of the fighting took place in the region of 'Song Kwê,' which was the old name for Pitsanulōk.

Muang Chālieng, the ancient site on which Sachanalai (Sawankalōk) was built, was besieged, but the Chiengmai forces were beaten off, and had to retire in order to meet an attack from Lūang Prabāng. This they did successfully, and followed it up by attacking Lūang Prabāng itself. The city was too strong to take, however, and the Chiengmai army returned to Lān Nā Tai. Still the wars with Ayudhya continued, and in 1457 Phra Borom Trai Lōkanāt, with his son Phra Borom Raja, came in person via Lampāng to invest Chiengmai, and made another great attempt to subdue it. But Tilōkarāt summoned the Governors of Chieng Rai, Pitsanulōk, and Phayao, as well as many lesser Chiefs, to his aid, and, gathering his forces, went out to meet the Ayudhyan army at the foot of Doi Bā (a few hours' walk south of Lamphūn). The Siamese forces, although they had the assistance of the Chiefs of Sukhōthai and Kamp-hēngphet, could not withstand the onslaught of the Chiengmai troops, and again were forced to retire in confusion.

But they did not give Tilōkarāt much time for repose, for three years later, in 1460, the King of Siam once more came north to attack Phrê. Still Tilōkarāt prevailed against the Ayudhyan forces, and followed them as far as Chālieng (Sawankalōk), which he besieged and captured, for the first time in the history of the North. The Chief of Chālieng was banished, and a Lao noble put in his place.

The King of Ayudhya then made overtures for peace, at the same time declaring his intention of going into the priesthood for a time, and asking Tilōkarāt to send him a number of priests from Chiengmai to instruct him. Tilōkarāt sent the priests as desired; but when, later on, one of them returned with a request that he would restore Sawankalōk to the Siamese Kingdom, the Council which Tilōkarāt summoned to deliberate on this proposal decided against it, and the request was refused.

Still peace was concluded, and from that time until the death of Tilōkarāt in 1487 there were no further wars with Ayudhya, except for a last ineffectual and half-hearted attack by Phra Boroma Trai Lōkanāt of Ayudhya in 1486.

Thus Tilōkarāt gallantly maintained the independence of his Kingdom against the constant attacks of superior forces, and for twenty-five years or more peace reigned in his dominion.



A SECTION OF THE NORTHERN RAILWAY LINE NEAR KHUN TÂN.

In 1487 he died at the age of 78, and was succeeded by his grandson, Yôt Chiengrai, and in the same year the Chief of Chieng Sên died too. The reign of Yôt Chiengrai is chiefly to be remembered by the fact that the famous Crystal Buddha, which had long been venerated in Chiengmai, was stolen by one of the Royal Family of Ayudhya, who had come to Chiengmai as a priest, by means of a stratagem and bribery, and taken off to Ayudhya. When the King of Chiengmai discovered the fraud and demanded it back again, Rama Thibodi II, the King of Ayudhya, refused to deliver it. A force was thereupon sent against Ayudhya in 1492, and rather than risk the chances of another war, the latter finally agreed to restore it.

But Yôt Chiengrai was evidently born under an unlucky star (he had the misfortune to be crowned on a Monday!), and he soon caused great dissatisfaction among all classes of his people. He was finally deposed in 1495, and banished to Mûang Chanât Mûang Noi, where he lived in seclusion for another 11 years, dying in 1506.

His son, Pilākā Panatta, which means 'the great grandson of Pilaka (Tilōkarāt)', was elected King at the age of 14, and, after a certain period spent in the priesthood, took over the Government of the Kingdom in 1497, under the name of Phra Mûang Keo.

The reign of this Prince, which lasted 30 years, was an eventful one, and saw a renewal of the wars between Chiengmai and Ayudhya.

Phra Mûang Keo made the first move in 1507 by attacking Sukhōthai, but he was badly defeated and forced to retire in confusion to Chiengmai.

In 1508 and 1510 the King of Ayudhya retaliated by sending armies against Mûang Phrê, but he in his turn was beaten off, and these adventures came to nothing.

Frequent raids by Chiengmai, in 1513 and 1514, on Sukhōthai and Sawankalōk (which had evidently been recovered by Ayudhya) followed, and in 1515 these raids were pushed as far as Kamphēngphet.

This was the signal for the outbreak of operations on a larger scale, and in 1515 a Siamese army, under King Rama Thibodi II, advanced to put a stop to these depredations.

The Chiengmai forces came to meet them and, crossing the Mē Wāng, gave battle in the neighbourhood of Lampāng. But though the King of Ayudhya captured Lampāng on this occasion, he could make no further progress, and the fighting became of a desultory nature, with no definite result on either side.

It is said that in this year an epidemic of 'Torapit' (small-pox) broke out in Lān Nā Tai, and devastated the countryside, and it was this probably that brought the fighting to an end. A state of war must have been continued for some years, however, for it was not until 1522 that peace was finally concluded between Chiangmai and Ayudhya.

In 1523 Phra Mūang Keo captured Chieng Tung, and in the same year a band of Buddhist priests went to Lūang Prabāng on a religious mission.

In 1525 Phra Mūang Keo died, and as he left no son to succeed him, his brother, Mūang Ket Klao, was chosen as King at the age of 28. But this King after some years proved to be as unsatisfactory and oppressive as his father, Yôt Chieng Rai, had been.

In 1538, therefore, he was formally deposed by his son and all the principal nobles, and this son, Chao Sai Kham, was crowned King. But the son proved even worse than the father, and in 1543 he was assassinated by a band of nobles, who were unable to endure any longer his cruelties and oppressive rule. Phra Ket Klao became King again, but apparently his own deposition and the fate of his son had not been sufficient warning to him, for his rule became even more oppressive than before, and he in his turn was assassinated one night in 1545, as he was entering the city gate.

It is curious how oppression and misrule within always invite attack from without, and now a period is approaching when all the labours of Tilōkarāt and Phra Mūang Keo to keep their Kingdom independent and free are to go for naught, and the land is to fall under the rule first of Hongswādi (Pegu) and then, when the power of that realm passes away, under that of Ava, and to remain a vassal State for more than 200 years.

The clouds are beginning to gather, and twenty years of misgovernment are to end in confusion and chaos throughout the land. The scene is set, and it only remains to produce the actors in the drama.

After the murder of Phra Ket Klao in 1545, the chief of the conspirators, a noble named Sên Dao, sent an invitation to the Chief of Chieng Tung to come and be crowned King of Chiangmai, but the Chief of Chieng Tung declined the offer. Sên Dao then turned his attention to the Chief of Mūang Nai (Mōné), but before this Prince, who was willing to accept the Crown, could arrive, other plans of an entirely different nature were being formed elsewhere by other people. The four Governors of Chiangmai, Chieng Rai, Chieng Sên, and Mūang Pān met

in conclave at Chieng Sên and unanimously decided to send an embassy to Lūang Prabāng, to ask the King of Lān Chāng to allow his eldest son, whose mother was a daughter of Phra Ket Klao, to be appointed King of Lān Nā Tai. The embassy was well received by the King of Lān Chāng, and the proposal approved by him.

In the meanwhile the Chief of Hsenwi, hearing of the rebellion which had broken out at Chiengmai, led an army to besiege it ; but Sên Dao offered such a stout resistance that the Chief of Hsenwi withdrew to Lamphūn, and from there sent an embassy of eleven Siamese to the King of Ayudhya (Phra Chai Raja) to beg for assistance against Chiengmai.

Soon after this incident had occurred, the party of nobles, who had met at Chieng Sên, returned to Chiengmai, seized Sên Dao and his fellow conspirators and executed them, and then appointed the Princess Mahā Thēwi (Phra Nāng Chao Chira Prapa) as Regent, until the arrival of the King of Lān Chāng's son.

The King of Ayudhya met the request of the Chief of Hsenwi and in 1545 led out a force to besiege Chiengmai, but the Queen Regent wisely entered into a parley with him, which resulted in the withdrawal of the Ayudhyan forces. So clever was this lady in her negotiations that she induced the King of Siam to subscribe the sum of five thousand ticals towards building a Temple and Pagoda in memory of Phra Mūang Ket Klao, before he withdrew to Ayudhya. Unfortunately this proved to be only a breathing space, for in 1548 the King of Siam brought a large army north again, captured Lamphūn by a stratagem, and then went on to besiege Chiengmai. The siege was long and marked by strenuous fighting on both sides, but it was not successful, and eventually the King of Siam had to withdraw his forces, having lost many men and elephants. He died on the way back to Ayudhya.

In the same year the Chief of Moné, being disappointed of the promise made him to be appointed King, also made an attack on Chiengmai, but this in its turn failed, and he was repulsed and forced to retire to his own State again.

The year 1545 was indeed a disastrous one for Chiengmai, for in addition to all the rebellions, assassinations, executions, and sieges which she had to witness and undergo, it is recorded that there was a great earthquake that year in the city, and that the spires of the great Pagodas at 'Wāt Lūang' and 'Wāt Phrā Singh' fell down and crashed to pieces.

In the following year, 1546, Chai Chettawong, the twelve

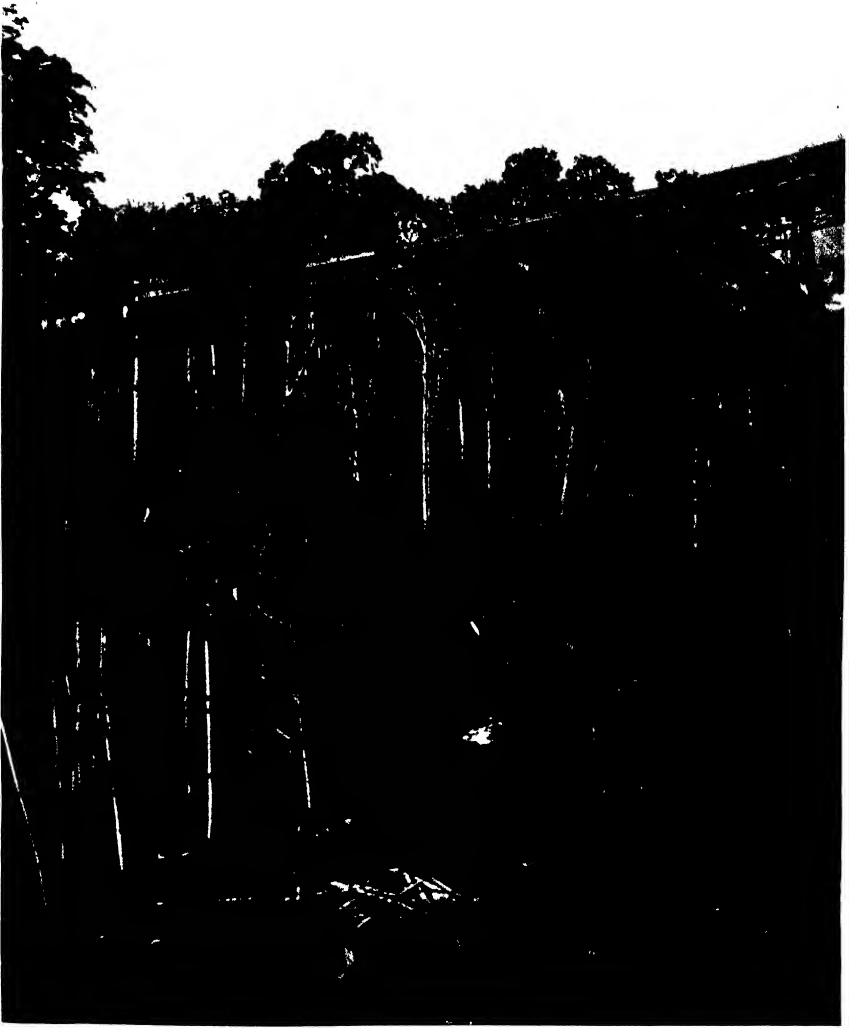
years old son of Pōtisān, King of Lān Chāng, by Yôt Khām Tīp, the daughter of Ket Klao, made a state progress through Chieng Sên and Chieng Rai, and finally was crowned King of Lān Nā Tai at Chiengmai. But in the very next year, his father, Pōtisān, was killed at Lūang Prabāng by an elephant accidentally falling upon him and crushing him to death, and there arose a dispute among the Council regarding the succession. So in 1548 Chai Chettawong returned post-haste to Lūang Prabāng to claim his right to the throne. This he succeeded in proving, and in order to strengthen his position, he asked for and obtained the hand of the King of Ayudhya's daughter in marriage. In the meantime civil war broke out in Chiengmai again, and lasted till 1551, when the King of Lān Chāng sent word to say that he had no intention of returning to Chiengmai, and enjoined upon the nobles to re-elect Nang Chira Prapa Queen Regent as before. But the nobles of Chiengmai would not agree to this, and sent an embassy to Phrā Mekūt, the Chief of Mūang Nai (Moné), who was a descendant of the famous Meng Rai, to come to Chiengmai and assume the crown of Lān Nā Tai. The Chief of Moné responded to this offer, and promptly came to Chiengmai, but the Chiefs of Chieng Sên and Chieng Rai refused to recognise him,¹ and he was forced to make an attempt to reduce them to submission. In this he failed, but he was able to stave off the King of Lūang Prabāng, who sent an army to attack him in the neighbourhood of the northern cities.

When the boy King of Lān Chāng returned to Lūang Prabāng after two years' residence in Chiengmai, he took with him the three famous Images of the Buddha, the 'Sāmrit',² the Crystal, and the Emerald Images, which had been so long set up in honour in Chiengmai. In 1556 an embassy was sent by Phra Mekut to the King of Lān Chāng to demand their return, but the latter was only willing to give up the Crystal and 'Sāmrit' Images, and declined to restore the Emerald Buddha, which he kept and which remained in the possession of Lān Chāng for more than two centuries afterwards.

And now comes the beginning of the end. In the year 1557 the famous Bureng Naung, King of Pegu (Hongsaṃwadi), led out his army to punish the Chief of Mōné, and at the same time he sent a warning to the King of Lān Nā Tai not to assist Mōné

¹ According to the Nān Chronicle, this was a Princess, not a Prince. The name is given as Chao Mē Kūti.

² 'Sāmrit' is a composition of 3, 5, 7, or 9 metals, according to the prescription used, and is held in high esteem by the Siamese.



CONSTRUCTION ENGINE CROSSING A VIADUCT NEAR PHRÊ.

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and to take no part in the struggle. But the King of Chiengmai (it must be agreed, rather naturally) did not regard this warning, and attempted to come to the aid of Mōné. He failed, and brought down the wrath of Bureng Naung upon his own head; for in the next year, 1558, the King of Pegu marched against Chiengmai itself, and such was the weakness of the Kingdom as the result of years of dissension and rebellion, that the city and the whole Kingdom fell into his hands without a struggle, and Phra Meküt became the vassal Chief of Bureng Naung. Thus the line of independent Kings of Lān Nā Tai, which began with Meng Rai in 1296, came to an end, and Lān Nā Tai became intermittently a vassal State of Burma until nearly the end of the eighteenth century.

In 1564 Phra Meküt, who was still Viceroy of Chiengmai, made an attempt to cast off the shackles of Burma, but he was defeated by the Peguan forces sent against him, and despatched in chains to Hongsaṃwadi. The Kingdom of Lān Nā Tai being now firmly in his hands, Bureng Naung turned his attention to Siam, and in 1568 at the head of a great force attacked Ayudhya and captured it. Further, in 1572, he overran the Kingdom of Lān Chāng, and by this conquest he thus brought the whole of Siam Proper and Northern Siam under the sway of Burma. He was assisted in his conquest of Siam by a certain Thammaraja, a descendant of the Kings of Sukhōthai, who had married a daughter of the King of Ayudhya and had been made Governor of Pitsanulōk. For his help Thammaraja was made Viceroy (or vassal King) of Ayudhya, and ruled till 1590.

In 1581 Bureng Naung died, and, with its customary reaction, the pendulum at once began to swing the other way, in Siam at least. For there then arose one of her most famous sons, Narésuan, who was destined not only to relieve Siam of the burden of Burma, but to raise her name once more high in the annals of the Far East. Narésuan was the elder son of Thammaraja and, after the capture of Ayudhya in 1568, had been taken as a hostage to Burma. He returned, however, in 1571, at the age of 16, and was appointed Governor of Pitsanulōk. After the death of Bureng Naung, Nanda Bureng,¹ his son and successor, had issued orders to Narésuan, who was the virtual head of the State in Siam by this time, to raise an army and proceed against Ava, which was then beginning to make headway against Pegu. But Narésuan, although he raised an army, rebelled himself, turned it against Pegu, and heavily defeated

¹ In Harvey's 'History of Burma' called Nanda Bayin.

the Burmese forces under Nanda Bureng, who came to quell the rebellion. The following year, as the result of this outbreak, Chiengmai was ordered by Nanda Bureng to attack Ayudhya, but the army sent to achieve this purpose was met and routed by Narésuan, who found himself now master of a Siam, once more independent and free. It was Pegu's turn to undergo the humiliations of conquest, for, after his defeat by Narésuan, Nanda Bureng was attacked by the Chiefs of Northern Burma and finally slain by the Chief of Ava, who reduced Hong-sāwadi to ashes and transferred the capital of the country to the former city.

From this time onward Lān Nā Tai gradually passed under the dominion of Ava. It is recorded that Narésuan, who reigned until 1605, captured Chiengmai in 1598, but it could not have remained in Siamese hands for long, for it is also recorded that in 1631 Suthō Thammarāt, King of Ava, reconquered Chiengmai, which had rebelled against him.¹

Chieng Rai and Chieng Sên were taken by Ava in 1600; Nān and Chieng Tung were brought under its sway in 1625 and 1626 respectively; and 1631, the same year as that in which Chiengmai rebelled, also saw a fresh subdual of Chieng Rai and Chieng Sên.

Suthō Thāmmarāt died in 1638, but Chiengmai still remained under the rule of Ava until 1660, when the famous King Narai of Ayudhya sent a strong force northwards, which overran Lān Nā Tai and captured Chiengmai, Lamphūn, Lampāng, and Chieng Sên.

This interregnum lasted, however, only for two years, during which time Chiengmai sent no tribute to Ava, and then the Siamese forces withdrew, and the country passed under Ava once more.

In 1679 the Viceroy of Chiengmai died, and the King of Ava sent his son to take his place. He died in 1685, and his son Māng Ren Nā, who then became Viceroy, ruled over Chiengmai for 42 years.

In 1701 a war broke out between Ava and Southern China and, as a result of the fighting which took place in the vicinity of Chieng Sên, the latter city was made independent of Chiengmai, and brought under the direct rule of Ava. The Viceroy of Chiengmai resented this act, and in 1704 attacked Chieng Sên, killed its Chief, and set up a man of his own choice there in his place.

¹ European records say that the King of Ava recaptured Chiengmai from Ayudhya in 1615.

As an interesting matter of minor importance it is recorded in the History of Yōnākā that in the year 1707 many 'Pla Beuk'—the famous sturgeon of the Mēkhōng, from which delicious cavaire is made—were caught in the river Mē Khōk, the tributary of the Mēkhōng, on which Chieng Rai is situated—and this was evidently considered an unusual occurrence.

In the year 1715 a certain nobleman named Phya Tūn was made Prince of Nān by the King of Ava, on the sudden death of the original candidate selected, and the family of Phya Tūn has ruled over Nān down to the present day.

In 1717 another interesting incident happened, as recorded in the 'History of Yōnākā.' The river Mēkhōng overflowed its banks at Chieng Sên to the depth of five feet, and no less than four Temples, Wat Ton Tong, Wat Ton Keo, Wat Bun Yūn, and Wat Phra Būat, fell down and became deserted ruins.

In 1727 the people of Chiengmai rebelled against Ava, killed the Viceroy, and then proceeded to march against Chieng Sên. But the rebels were defeated there, and hundreds of prisoners were sent to Ava as slaves.

But soon another rebel leader arose in Chiengmai under the name of Ong Kham, who raised a considerable force and defeated the Burmese both at Chiengmai and Phayao, thus making himself master of Chiengmai.

In 1751 Chieng Sên was captured by bands of Lū and Khōn, Tai tribes coming from the north, but in 1755 it was recovered by Ava, probably with Chiengmai at the same time. In 1757 Chieng Sên was lost again to Lūang Prabāng, and in 1761 another successful rebellion broke out in Cheingmai.

In the meantime Alaung Phra, the King of Ava, in 1759 besieged Ayudhya, but without success; and it was not until after his death, on his way home, that the Burmese, in 1767, under Sin Byu Shin, the son of Alaung Phra, made their final successful attack on Ayudhya, which was captured and sacked, and most of the population put to the sword. The King of Siam died an unknown death, the archives were destroyed, and the Ayudhyan Dynasty, which had endured for 417 years, came to an abrupt and tragic end.

At about the same time Burmese armies advanced to the north and once more successfully brought the country to submission.

Now it seems that in the year 1732 Lampāng was a small Principality, independent of either Ava, Ayudhya, or Chiengmai; and that, when a feud broke out between that city and Lamphūn,

the former was saved by a certain Nai Thip, who was immediately acclaimed as a hero and elected Prince of Lampāng under the style of Phra Sulāwā, or Chai Songkrām (Victorious in Battle). Phra Sulāwā died in 1751, and Lampāng then became tributary to Ava again. But Phra Sulāwā had four sons and two daughters, and it is from this family that the present Chiefs of Chiengmai, Lamphūn and Lampāng are descended.

One of the sons of Phra Sulāwā, named Chai Keo, had seven sons, and of these, Kāwila the eldest, born in 1742, eventually became Chief of Chiengmai; Kham Sūn, the second, born in 1744, became Chief of Lampāng; and Noi Dūang, the fifth, born in 1760, became Chief of Lamphūn. The name of Kāwila stands high among the Lao heroes of the north.

After the sacking of Ayudhya in 1767, the Burmese corvée masses of the population of Lān Nā Tai to join them in an attack on Lūang Prabāng, but by 1770 another figure had already arisen in the south, whose high fate it was to drive the Burmese finally out of Siam both north and south, to rescue the country from the depths to which it had fallen, and to pave the way for the founding of another Siamese Dynasty with its capital, this time, at Bangkok.

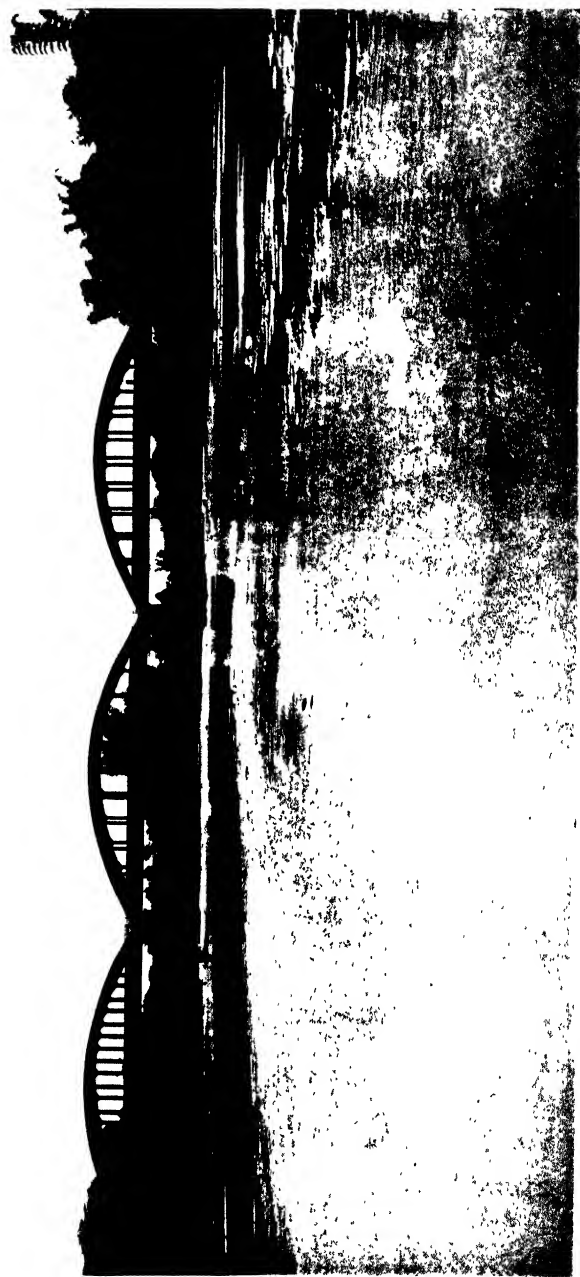
This remarkable man was Phya Tāk who, as his name shows, was Governor of Raheng.¹ He determined to try his fortunes against the Burmese, and in 1771, while the King of Burma was attacking Lūang Prabāng, sent a Siamese force which suddenly appeared before the walls of Chiengmai.

A curious fact, hard to believe, but worthy of record, is given in the 'History of Yōnākā,' which states that in 1770 the King of Ava issued an order that all males in the north of Siam should be tattooed black, and that all females should pierce their ears and wear earrings in the Burmese fashion; and that the modern customs are derived from that time and that order. It is true that the Lao of the north are divided into two camps, the 'white-bellied Lao' (i.e. non-tattooed) and the 'black-bellied Lao' (i.e. tattooed) of Lān Chāng and Lān Nā Tai, respectively; and it may be that the King of Ava's order never extended to the east bank of the Mēkhōng, thus accounting for the difference. But it is almost certain that the custom of tattooing in northern Siam is of a much earlier origin than 1770; and in all probability was copied from the Shan, with whom the custom is of very ancient date.

After this digression, we may resume our story.

The Burmese troops defending Chiengmai beat off the

¹ Tāk is the Siamese name for Raheng on the Mé Ping.



THE NEW CONCRETE ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER AT LAMPANG.

Siamese advance force and sent word to Sin Byu Shin, the King of Ava, who at once returned from his campaign against Lūang Prabāng.

In the meantime a certain Lao nobleman, Chā Bān by name, had concerted measures with Kāwila, who was at this time Chief of Lampāng, by which to betray the Burmese and hand over Chiengmai and the north to the Siamese.

They suggested to Sin Byu Shin that they should form an army of Lao to act as an advance guard and bar the way of the main Siamese army coming north. Sin Byu Shin willingly accepted their offer, and a large force of Lao, with a mixture of Shan and Burmese, marched south as far as Kamphēngphet. But there, meeting with Chao Phya Chakkri, the General in command of the Siamese forces, they massacred all the Shan and Burmese in their ranks and went bodily over to the Siamese.

With this accretion to his force, Chao Phya Chakkri continued his march northwards and, defeating a small Burmese army sent to impede him, crossed the Mē Ping and advanced towards Chiengmai.

As soon as he heard of the success of his plan, Kāwila, who had also massacred all the Burmese in Lampāng, hastily raised a force of his own and set out for Chiengmai, too. Speed was vital to him for his father was living at that time in Chiengmai, and he was afraid that, when Sin Byu Shin heard of his treachery, he would at once order the old man to be killed. But, entering the city by night, he caught the garrison entirely by surprise, and was able to rescue his father, before any steps could be taken against him. The Governor of Chiengmai fled, and Kāwila handed over the city to Phya Tāk, who had come up from Thonburi in person, on a Sunday in the fifth month of the year C.S. 1136, or 1774 A.D.

The plunder taken included over 2,000 guns, large and small, 32 drums, and 200 horses, while the captives included 500 Mōn and 500 Sawankalōk families; and from this date the Burmese permanent occupation of Chiengmai came to an end.

Phya Tāk placed Governors over the cities of Chiengmai and Lamphūn, and then retired with his main forces to Lampāng, where he confirmed Kāwila as Chief, in return for the services he had rendered, and offered up thanks for his victory at the great Temple of Lampāng Lūang. At this time, as a result of his victory, Nān and Phrē also submitted to Phya Tāk.

It was not likely, however, that the King of Ava would tamely give up his dominion over Lān Nā Tai without a struggle, and Phya Tāk had not long to wait before the shock came.

The following year, in 1775, Sin Byu Shin sent a large force to besiege Thonburi, and another to take the field further north against Raheng, Kamphêngphet and Sawankalōk, all of which cities were captured by the Burmese.

This northern force then invested Pitsanulōk, but Chao Phya Chakkri, who was in command there, withstood the siege successfully for more than four months and drove the Burmese off. The attacks of the latter on Chiangmai also failed signally, and Chao Phya Chakkri was preparing to advance on Chieng Sên, when he received orders to return to the south, to assist Phya Tāk in his defence of Thonburi against the main Burmese forces.

The Siamese, with his aid, beat off the Burmese in the south without much difficulty, but as soon as Chao Phya Chakkri had left the north, the Burmese re-appeared there, and both Chā Bān, who was in charge of Chiangmai, and Kāwila had to flee for their lives, the one to Raheng and the other to Sawankalōk. But the occupation did not last long, for the Burmese power was fast coming to an end, and Kāwila came back to Lampāng in 1778. Chā Bān also came back to Lamphūn, but found it in the hands of a force from Chieng Sên.

In the same year Chao Phya Chakkri laid siege to Wieng Chan and captured it, and then sent a small force of Siamese to carry out a tour of inspection in the districts of Phrê, Nān and Lampāng. But this force robbed and oppressed the countryside to such an extent, that the bold and fearless Kāwila angrily turned against them and drove them away.

For this act of insolence he was summoned to Thonburi, together with Chā Bān, who himself had committed the offence of killing his Deputy for some alleged wrong; and, although the King's mercy was shown towards them in return for past services rendered, yet each received one hundred strokes of the rattan, and in addition Kāwila had both his ears cut off.

Chā Bān died in confinement in Thonburi, but Kāwila soon afterwards regained favour by offering to subdue the northern city, Chieng Sên—which promise he faithfully carried out.

In 1781 Kāwila, who was by this time back in the north, received news that Phya Tāk was mad and had been deposed, and that Chao Phya Chakkri, his principal General, had been offered the throne of Siam. He lost no time therefore in repairing to Bangkok with his family and in offering homage to Phya Tāk's successor.

This gave great pleasure to Chao Phya Chakkri, who saw in Kāwila a source of help and strength in the north, and the latter

was at once appointed Chief of Chiengmai, with one brother as his Deputy and another brother as Chief of Lampāng.

It must be realised that at this period the north of Siam was in a sorry state. The constant fighting and the oppressive measures of the Burmese had depopulated the countryside and reduced it to a miserable condition of poverty and desolation. Chiengmai itself had lain utterly deserted from a time shortly after the final defeat of the Burmese there in 1774, and most of the other cities were in varying stages of ruin and decay.

In 1783 Kāwila sent presents, therefore, and messages of friendship to all the neighbouring Chiefs, and did his utmost to gather bands of folk together to repopulate the villages once more, and bring back some measure of prosperity to the countryside.

Still the Burmans were not done with yet, and those forces still in possession of the northern districts, Chieng Rai and Mūang Fāng, swooped down upon Lampāng, at the same time capturing Thōn, Phrê and the district to the south and south-east.

Lampāng held out for nearly three months, and was then relieved by the timely arrival of a Siamese army, which completely routed the Burmese and then proceeded to defeat another Burmese force in the vicinity of Sawankalōk.

Thereupon all the people of the captured districts, who had fled southwards, returned to their old habitations, and the folk of Mūang Fāng, Chieng Rai, and Mūang Sāt all joined together and rebelled against Burma. Moreover, the Burmese had once more withdrawn from Chieng Sên, and the Chief of that city thereupon threw in his lot with Kāwila, and placed himself under the protection of Siam.

Still the King of Ava determined to make another bid for dominion over Lān Nā Tai, and sent a large army, which occupied Chieng Sên and Chieng Rai, and forced all the Chiefs and people of the north to flee to Lampāng, which was then besieged by the Burmese.

But although Lao forces were collected throughout the countryside and sent in relief of Lampāng, they were defeated by the Burmese, and Kāwila had once more to send to Bangkok for help.

The Siamese army, sent in response to the call, was again successful, and completely defeated the Burmese, who fled; and Chao Phya Chakkri then commanded Kāwila to rebuild Chiengmai and to take up his residence there as Chief.

In 1788 Kāwila, with his own forces, beat off the Burmese in

a raid they made upon him from Mûang Fāng, and in 1791 he attempted to rebuild Chiengmai, which was entirely in ruins. But he was not successful, for the whole land was still in a state of disorder, and he was called away to Mûang Fāng, where he again attempted to drive the Burmese out of Lān Nā Tai.

In 1794 the famous Wat Lūang was restored in Chiengmai amid great rejoicings, and in 1796 Kāwila finally left Pā Chāng, which was seven days' slow march from Chiengmai, and which he had occupied for 16 years, and went to reside in Chiengmai once again.

But his troubles were not yet at an end, and the war with Burma continued for a number of years.

In 1797 the King of Ava again attacked Chiengmai, as soon as he had heard that it was being re-occupied, and, although he was beaten off, he sent force after force against it, until the population of the city were reduced, it is said, to such straits that they had nothing to eat but the flesh of the Burmese they killed.

Being almost at the end of his tether, Kāwila sent an urgent message to Bangkok for help, to which the King of Siam at once responded by sending up a strong force which routed the Burmese army and brought relief and food to the besieged. It is stated that on this occasion the famous Crystal Buddha, which had been recovered from Lūang Prabāng, was taken down to Bangkok, where it has remained ever since in the inner precincts of the Royal Palace.

In 1799, after a successful expedition against the Burmese who still occupied the northern districts of his territory, Kāwila returned to Chiengmai and gave his rebuilt city the high-sounding Pali name of 'Mûang Ratana Teung Sā Apināburi.'

In 1801 the Burmese stirred up the Shan Chiefs to the north of Siam to re-settle the cities on the east bank of the Mēkhōng, which had been deserted, but as soon as word was brought of this movement Kāwila at once moved north, drove the Shan Chiefs out, and brought all those cities under the control of Chiengmai.

Having failed in his attempt to overawe Chiengmai, the King of Ava appointed a Hô Chief as lord over 57 cities in the realm of Lān Nā Tai; but Kāwila immediately sent an army against the Hô Prince, and gave battle at Mûang Sāt (16 days' march from Chiengmai). As a result of this encounter, the Hô Prince was captured and brought to Chiengmai, while the Lao army went on to Chieng Tung, sacked it, and from there proceeded to attack many other cities in the 'Sip-Sōng Pān Nā' (the twelve Divisions of Fields).



THE ROAD FROM LAMPĀNG TO PHĀYAO.

Kāwila on his return took his Hô prisoner down to Bangkok, and for his valiant defence of the north received from the King of Siam the high rank of 'Phra Borom Racha Thibodi Sri Suriyawong.'

But Chieng Sên still remained in the hands of the Burmese, and it was not until 1804, after a long and unsuccessful siege of that city in 1803, that the Lao finally captured it and drove the Burmese out of Siam. This, to the Lao, signal victory was followed by a regular campaign against the Shan Chiefs in the Sip-Sông Păn Nā—a campaign which proved entirely successful, and in which many of the Chiefs were captured in person and sent to Bangkok as prisoners.

In 1809 Chieng Khăm and Müang Sôk to the north-east were brought under the rule of Chiengmai, and in this year the King of Siam died, and was succeeded by his son, Phra Phütta Lôt Lā.

In 1813 the long reign of the heroic Kāwila came to an end, after 33 years of rule, 16 at Pā Chāng and 17 at Chiengmai.

He made one unfortunate, though under the circumstances justifiable, slip, for which he paid dearly; but he undoubtedly did more than any other man to free his country from the Burmese yoke, and deserves to live long in the hearts and minds of his fellow-countrymen as a national hero. No doubt one day, when this people has acquired a strong national tradition, we shall find monuments to his memory in many northern cities. Peace be to his ashes, for he must have been a brave man.

After the death of Kāwila in 1813, his younger brother, Noi Thămma, became Chief; and two years later, in 1815, this appointment was confirmed by the King of Siam. This Chief is always known as 'Chāng Pūk,' i.e. White Elephant, because he presented a white elephant to the Siamese King.

In 1821 Noi Thămma died, and his younger brother, Khăm Făn, was made Chief; and in 1823 Dūang Thip was raised to be Chief of Lampāng by King Phütta Lôt Lā. The next year, 1824, King Phütta Lôt Lā himself died, and was succeeded by his son, Phra Nāng Klao. In 1825 both Khăm Făn and Dūang Thip died. The son of Khăm Făn, named Phüttawong, was made Chief of Chiengmai, and Khănăn Chai, Chief of Lampāng. In 1826 the Governor of Lamphūn was created Chief of Lamphūn, and in this year Wieng Chăn rebelled against Siam and attacked Kōrāt, but was easily subdued by the King of Siam.

In 1838 there occurred punitive expeditions against certain Shan Chiefs in the north, and in 1842 the King of Burma sent

an envoy to make a treaty of peace with Northern Siam; but as soon as the embassy arrived, it was sent to Bangkok to achieve its purpose.

In the following year, 1843, a northern deputation came to Bangkok, to petition the King that Chieng Rai should be made a dependency of Chiengmai, and that Mùang Ngao and Phayao should come within the sphere of Lampāng. To this division of territory the King of Siam agreed.

In 1846 Phūttawong died, and his brother Mahāwong became Chief of Chiengmai.

In 1851 Phra Nāng Klao died, and his half-brother, Mongkut Klao, who had retired to a monastery on the other's accession, now came out of retirement and was crowned King of Siam. In 1852 all three northern Chiefs, of Chiengmai, Lamphūn and Lampāng, came down to Bangkok to pay homage to the new King and brought the customary tribute of gold and silver flowers.

In 1854 the Chief of Chiengmai died, and difficulties arose in the Chief's family over the succession. After due consideration, King Mongkut appointed Khanān Suriyawong, a son of Kāwila, the first Chief after the Burmese occupation, to be Chief under the name of Kāwilōrot (son of Kāwila) Suriyawong; and at the same time he used the occasion to settle the succession of the other two northern Chiefs as well.

In 1861 Kāwilōrot was made 'Phrā Chao,' or Prince of Chiengmai, and the following year he went to worship and offer up thanks at the great Temple at Lampāng Lūang.

But in 1865 troubles arose for Kāwilōrot. It seems that he had been exchanging embassies with the King of Burma, and this led the 'Upārāt,' or Deputy-Chief, and many of the other notabilities of Chiengmai, to send a complaint to King Mongkut that the Prince was plotting with the King of Burma to restore the Burmese dominion.

King Mongkut at once sent up his Chief of Police to investigate the accusation brought against Kāwilōrot, and as a result of the enquiries which the latter made, he brought down Kāwilōrot together with all his accusers to Bangkok. There Kāwilōrot was tried by a Court of Ministers, but acquitted of all treasonable practices and sent back to Chiengmai as Prince, after he had handed up to the King the presents he had received from the King of Burma. It was considered advisable that his former accusers should remain in Bangkok, to avoid any further trouble, but when the Upārāt died in 1867, the Prince of Chiengmai agreed to bury his differences with the rest of his family and to allow them to return to the north.



A VIEW OF LAMPANG FROM THE RIVER.



THE RIVER AND BRIDGE AT CHIENGMAI.

In 1868 the State of Mòkmai, which was then under Siam, refused to pay tribute and rebelled; but the sovereignty had always been a very shadowy one, and although a punitive expedition was sent against it, it achieved no purpose and Mòkmai broke away from Siam altogether. In this year King Mongkut died, and his son Chulalongkorn was crowned King of Siam at the age of 15.

Two years later, in 1870, Kāwilōrot died, and Noi Intanon took his place. In 1871 a great case arose between the Chief of Chiengmai and a number of Shan and Burmese British subjects for personal damage inflicted upon them. The case was carried to Bangkok and tried before a body of Siamese Commissioners and the British Consul. In the issue, the Chief of Chiengmai won 21 cases and lost 11, and had to pay a sum of 320,000 ticals, which he borrowed from the Royal Siamese Treasury.

In 1873 Noi Intanon was confirmed as Chief of Chiengmai, and the next year, 1874 (? 1877) a Siamese High Commissioner was sent from Bangkok for the first time, to reside at Chiengmai, with an Assistant Commissioner, and a body-guard of 70 troops, ten officers and sixty men. From this time it may be said that the Siamese Government actually began to administer the North of Siam directly, and since that year, with the exception of a small affair with the Shan and Lū in 1875 at Chieng Sên, and a Shan rising in the neighbourhood of Phrè and Lampāng in 1902, nothing has occurred to disturb the tranquillity of the north.

The last dealing between Chiengmai and Burma took place in 1873, when an embassy went to Mandalay with presents and messages of friendship, and returned in 1874 with a map of Mandalay and a report on the country, which it sent to Bangkok.

The events leading up to the appointment of a resident Siamese Commissioner in the north, and the taking over of the direct administration by the Siamese Government, which was hastened, if not actually caused, by the attempts made by the American missionaries to establish a mission at Chiengmai, are well told by Dr. McGilvary in his 'A Half-Century among the Siamese and Lao,' and will be found described in another chapter.

It only remains to say here that since that time all the towns and districts have gradually been brought under the direct control of Bangkok, until to-day, although the Chiefs of Chiengmai, Lampāng, and Nān, still retain their names and nominal positions, their territories and revenues are administered by

purely Siamese officials from the South, that is, as far as the higher ranks are concerned.

Some few years ago, in the last reign, it was considered advisable to divide the Circle of Bāyāp into two parts, to be called Bāyāp and Mahārāt respectively, but they have now been re-amalgamated into one Circle.

Bāyāp now comprises the territories of Chiengmai, Chieng Rai, Lamphūn, Chieng Sēn, Lampāng, Phrē and Nān. A Viceroy of the Northern Provinces resides at Chiengmai, with Governors of other cities beneath him. This is no doubt a distinct advantage, since communications, as we understand them, are still in their infancy in the greater part of Bāyāp, and the whole territory is consequently too large to govern directly from one centre.

For many years past Siamese officials have considered it in the light of banishment and exile to be stationed in the northern provinces (or, for that matter, in any provincial centre far from Bangkok, the hub of their universe), but it is hoped that, with the railway now through to Chiengmai and the gradual opening up of the countryside by road communication, the stigma attaching to provincial residence will soon become a thing of the past, and that the better class of Siamese officials will vie with one another in playing their part in the economic development of their country and in the decentralisation which must from now onwards take place.

PART II
TOPOGRAPHICAL & ETHNOLOGICAL

CHAPTER III

European Intercourse with the North of Siam

UP to the second half of the nineteenth century, when the American missionaries made their first move northwards, European intercourse with the north of Siam, of which any record exists, was very scanty and only occurred at long intervals.

It is more than probable that in the sixteenth century a number of Portuguese adventurers made their way to Chiengmai in search of the pleasures of the country, either from Burma or in the train of the King of Siam when he warred against the Northern Kingdom, but not one has left behind any authentic record of his travels or of the state of the country at that time.

It is almost certain that Marco Polo, who arrived in China with his father and brother in 1275 at the age of 21, taking four years on the journey, and who remained in the Mongol Emperor's service for 17 years until 1292, never came as far south as the Lao country, though he travelled over large portions of the Chinese Empire. But he gives a description from hearsay of the land of Caugigu (or Cangigu), which in all probability refers to a portion at least of the Tai country, if not to Northern Siam itself, and constitutes therefore the first European reference known. Col. Yule's translation of Marco Polo's travels (John Murray, 1875) gives a lively account of the land in question, and is worth quoting in full:

"Caugigu (or Cangigu) is a province towards the East (i.e. east of Mien, or Burma), which has a King. The people are idolaters and have a language of their own. They have made their submission to the Great Kaan, and send him tribute every year. And let me tell you their King is so given to luxury that he hath at the least 300 wives, for whenever he hears of any beautiful woman in the land, he takes and marries her.

"They find in this country a good deal of gold, and they also have great abundance of spices. But they are such a long way from the sea that the products are of little value, and thus their price is low. They have elephants in great numbers and other cattle of sundry kinds, and plenty of game. They live on flesh and *milk* and rice, and have wine made of rice and good spices. The whole of the people, or

nearly so, have their skin marked with the needle in patterns representing lions, dragons, birds and what not, done in such a way that it can never be obliterated. This work they cause to be wrought over face and neck and chest, and arms and hands and belly, and, in short, the whole body; and they look on it as a token of elegance so that those who have the largest amount of this embroidery are regarded with the greatest admiration."

Pauthier, the French traveller, thought this description to refer to Chiengmai itself, but actually Chiengmai was not founded till 1296, after Marco Polo had left China, and Garnier and Col. Yule are probably much nearer the mark in assigning it to M'uang Y'ong, the centre of a Tai Kingdom a little south-east of Chieng Tung, now and also then occupied by Tai Yai, or Shan. It certainly does not refer to L'uang Prabang, as the people of that district have never tattooed themselves, and are still called 'Lao P'ung Khao' or 'white-bellied Lao'; and it is possible that the Lao of Chieng Sên and Chieng Rai also at that time had not yet learnt the practice of tattooing, although they have now.

Where the word 'Caugigu' is derived from, or what it signifies, is very hard to say; but the mediaeval European way of transliterating Eastern names is beyond all hope, and, if anything, even worse than the modern popular way. Just to give some idea of the confusion, here are some different ways met with of spelling Chiengmai:—Jangoma, Jamahay or Jamahey, Chiamay, Janguma, Zangomay, Jagoman, Jangoman, Zimmay, Jangamay, Jangama, and Jagama, amongst no doubt many others, according to the taste of the writer.

But to return to Caugigu. Wherever the name came from, the description is a fairly apt one of the Lao, though Marco Polo makes a curious slip in saying that the people live on flesh and *milk*. As a matter of fact, the Tai in general do not eat much meat, and they do not drink milk at all, not even the infants. It is a peculiar characteristic of the race. But his remark about their produce being so far from the sea as to have but little value is a shrewd one, and shows the clear mind of the Venetian merchant.

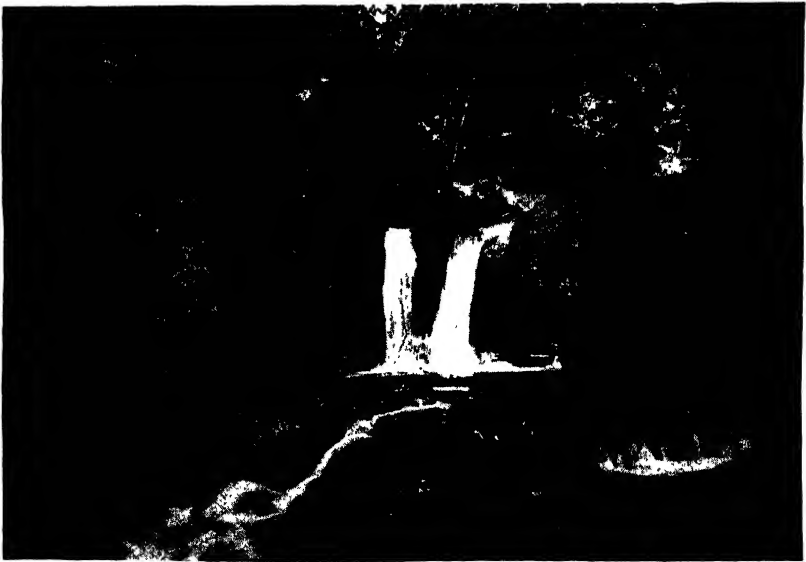
Now occurs a gap of two hundred and fifty years, until the famous Portuguese adventurer, Mendez Pinto,¹ appears on the scene about the year 1548.

This gentleman, who had visited China, Japan, Cochin-China

¹ I am told that in Portuguese this is pronounced 'Ment'sh Pint'.



CARRIERS STOPPING TO DRINK AT A RIVER.



A JUNGLE WATERFALL.

and Burma, and who on his own showing had been engaged in many hazardous enterprises and wars in the latter country, at length arrived in Ayudhya in the spring of 1548; and in the account of his travels he describes with considerable detail the war in that year between the King of Siam and the King of Chiengmai, who was attacking his northern borders, together with the events consequent thereon. In his relation Senhor Pinto does not believe in half measures. His armies always run into many hundreds of thousands, sometimes even into millions, and it is nothing for one side or the other to lose a hundred and fifty thousand men in a battle. His religious convictions, too, are constantly urging him to make long professions of faith, and to offer up prayers to the Almighty, either appeals or thanks for deliverance from some pressing danger. He would indeed have to be a hard-hearted fellow who did not believe in the sincerity of Pinto's Christian devotion!

The latter would also make it appear that he accompanied the King of Siam on his northern expedition, for he says "that of an hundred and thirty Portugals that we were (in Ayudhya), there were six score of *us* that agreed together to go to this war." But I am afraid that it was the old question of the flesh and the spirit over again, and that Mendez was one of the ten who remained behind to 'keep the home fires burning.' So that, although he gives a graphic account of the sieges and battles that took place, the details were doubtless culled from one of his compatriots upon their return. The names of places, in Siam itself and north of it, which he gives as being the scene of these encounters, are many of them grotesque in the extreme.

He quotes such names as Suropisem, a frontier town; Quitiruan, which the enemy were besieging; Siputay, which may be Sukōthai; the kingdom of Guibem, fifteen leagues north of the frontier; Passiloco, which is possibly Pitsanulōk; Capimper, which is thought to be Kamphengphet; Fumbacor, in the kingdom of Guibem; and Guitor, its capital city; as well as many other names of cities, which seem to walk straight out of the pages of Gulliver, whose author may, indeed, have been inspired by Pinto in his choice of names.

I must not therefore spend any further time in the company of Mendez Pinto, lest I become, in the reader's estimation, infected with the microbe to which he fell such an easy prey.

So far we have only hearsay descriptions of the north of Siam; and the first reliable European traveller to visit Chiengmai, of whom any record remains, was a certain Ralph Fitch, a London

merchant, who travelled in Burma and Further India about 1585. He journeyed from Pegu to Chiengmai overland in 25 days, but he gives very little space in his brief work to Northern Siam, beyond saying that Chiengmai was a fine city with wide streets. His other remarks seem chiefly to be concerned with the sexual proclivities of the Lao, which I can only recommend to the attention of the modern novelist who is earnestly seeking after 'realism.'

The next European reference to Northern Siam occurs in 1613, when early in that year Thomas Samuel was sent by the East India Company to Chiengmai with two assistants and a cargo of goods, to see what prospects of trade were to be had there. From a letter of instructions left by Lucas Antheunis, the Company's agent at Ayudhya, dated August 27, 1615, it appears that Samuel was still then in the north of Siam; and later accounts state that, on the re-conquest of Chiengmai by the King of Ava in the above year, Samuel and all other foreigners were carried off to Burma as prisoners. Samuel himself is reported to have died there soon afterwards. For this reason he has left no account of his travels behind, or of the prospects of trade in Chiengmai, and it remained for William Eaton, an intrepid and well-known English captain, to supply this deficiency. Writing from Firando in Japan in December, 1617, to Sir Thomas Smythe of the East India Company (presumably in India), after having paid a visit to Siam in his ship, the *Sea Adventure*, Eaton says:

"As concerning your trade at Siam, it is a place that will vent greater store of India cloth, and likewise other clothes that comes from the Coast of Coromandel, and to great profit, especially if the trade of Jangamay (Chiengmai) be once opened, which will be this next year it is thought. It is a place that will vent much clothing, as I am given to understand and for great profit, as 6 or 7 of one, besides the returns that may be made from thence, which is gold, rubies, and other precious stones; as also Benjamin (gum), sealing wax (sticklac), which commodities are in great request at the Coast of Coromandel, besides deer skins which are there very cheap. This place of Jangama (sic) is now under the King of Pegew (Ava), who hath gotten it by wars from the King of Siam. The merchants of the country of Lanchang, which is a place joining to the country of Jagama (sic), were coming down to the City of Judea (Ayudhya) before my coming away from thence. They brought down with them great store of

merchandise. There is no news as yet of him (i.e. Samuel) that Mr. Lucas Antonisonn (Antheunis) sent to Jangama with a cargo of goods belonging to the 7th voyage."

It is clear from this that even in 1617 the fate of Samuel and his assistants was still unknown to the Company, and it gives the modern business mind some idea of how extraordinarily speculative and adventurous these merchants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were. Imagine the state of mind of the directors of a European company to-day trading with Siam and being kept in ignorance for four years of the fate of their servants, to say nothing of that of their cargoes!

No doubt the rubies and precious stones referred to were brought from Burma overland to Chiengmai, as there are still the famous Mōgōk ruby mines being worked in that country, and, as far as is known, no such mines are known in the north of Siam. But Gum Benjamin and Sticklac, especially the latter, are still articles of commerce which come down regularly to Bangkok from the north to-day, and find a ready market abroad.

Lānchāng refers to the Kingdom of Lūang Prabāng, on the east bank of the Mēkhōng, once independent, then incorporated in Siam, and lastly annexed by France as the result of her difference with Siam in 1893. Dr. McGilvary, the missionary, gives a short but interesting account of it in his book. He says that

"Luang Prabang is the most compactly built of all cities outside Bangkok, and has a fine situation at the foot of a steep hill 200 feet high, which has a pagoda on top. The Nam Keng river joins the Meh Khong there, dividing the city into two unequal portions. The inhabitants are Tai (called 'white-bellied Lao'), but the city differs from other Lao cities, as it has no large rural population and extensive rice plains near it. Rice supplies are levied from the hill-tribes as a tax."

Presumably the journey from Ayudhya to Chiengmai was made in those early days by river and not overland, and it would be interesting to know how long such a journey occupied. Until the advent of the railway quite recently, the journey still had to be made by boat, and took anything from three to six weeks, according to the state of the water in the river. Dr. McGilvary once, in the sixties, took three months.

Owing to Samuel's capture and death, and to the troublous times that succeeded the recapture of Chiengmai by the Burmese,

the important trade envisaged by Captain Eaton does not seem to have materialised, or at least we hear nothing more of it, and the north of Siam still remains practically a sealed book to Europe.

But about 1657 or 1658 an Italian Jesuit priest, name Giovanni P. Marini, travelled extensively through northern Siam; and he has left behind a 'relation' in Italian of Tonquin and Lao, which was published in 1666 in a French edition, and which gives a remarkably exact and entertaining description of the Lanjans (i.e. people of Lānchāng, or Lūang Prabāng) and the Lao.

From a note by Monsieur La Croze in his 'Histoire du Christ,' published soon afterwards, the account of the Lao is said to have been written by another Jesuit, Leria, since it is stated that the original Italian of Marini has not been seen. However this may be, my knowledge of Marini is not drawn from any direct source, but from copious extracts given in a volume published in England in 1759, called 'The Modern Part of an Universal History,' Vol. VII, which deals with 'the Countries contained in the farther Peninsula of India.'

This work, which makes a serious and scholarly attempt to disentangle all the various conflicting conjectures about Indo-China then rife, and reduces them, with a certain amount of success, to some kind of ordered knowledge, is at the same time entertaining to a degree to the modern reader.

It is clear that the anti-papist bitterness was still strong in England in the second half of the eighteenth century, for the authors are constantly throwing out and interpolating jibish remarks against the Jesuits and the 'Romists'—remarks which, now that they have entirely lost their sting, are indeed amusing. For instance, in speaking of the religion of the Lanjans, the writer says:

"They continued in a simple and uncorrupted state till such time as the disciples of Shaka (i.e. Sakya or Buddha) began to spread their doctrines over the East. Some will have it that they received this polluted religion from the Chineses, but our author (i.e. Marini) rather follows those who think they had it from Siam. However that be, the Jesuit speaks of it as a most impious and idolatrous religion; *not considering, at the same time, that it is the very counterpart of his own.*"

Again, in speaking of the use of Holy Water, the History states:

"Our author (i.e. Marini) is at a loss to know how that



A VIEW FROM THE OLD LAMPĀNG-PHRÊ ROAD.



A FAMOUS PAGODA IN THE BURMESE STYLE NEAR LAMPĀNG.

usage came among them, unless from Ethiopia or India, by means of the disciples of St. Thomas. They send it to the sick as a sovereign remedy, and keep good store for the purpose; because, in return, they get so many bottles of good wine. But although the people receive no benefit from it, they have great faith in its virtue."

To this there is the following footnote:

"One would think our author is reflecting on those of his own religion; since this is as much the case with them as the Lanjans."

So much for the style and tone of the Universal History. Now for the text.

In an introductory chapter on the country of Jangoma, the editors give a short history of Chiengmai as far as was known at the time, and state that

"The inhabitants are well-set and strong. Their dress is very simple, consisting only in a cloth wrapped about them; and they wear bells in their privy members, like the people of Pegu and Ava."

This is got from Fitch, who no doubt retailed the circumstance with great gusto to his merchant friends in London, but is held suspicious and unreliable.

"They go both with their head and feet bare; for, in all these countries, they wear no shoes. The women are fairer than those of Pegu."

But in a much longer and more detailed account of the inhabitants of 'Lahos,' particularly the Lanjans, there is a description of the people, mostly from Marini, which can only have been born of a rose-coloured illusion, and which would certainly have put the Lanjans to the blush, if that were possible under their 'tawny' skin, had they been able to read it. This is what it says:

"The Lanjans are well-shaped and robust, rather fat than lean, and of an olive colour. They are good-natured, affable, courteous and obliging. The Laos resemble the Chinese in shape and mien, but are more tawny and slender, consequently of a much handsomer appearance than the Siameses. They have long ear-laps like the Peguers and inhabitants of the sea-coast. They are of a very sprightly genius and sound

¹ N.B.—In describing the Lanjans, it must be understood that the history is referring to the whole of the Southern Lao population, as distinct from the Northern Lao (or Shan).

understanding. They are fond of strangers, and value themselves on being sincere. They are free from deceit, and of great integrity; never breaking their promise or their trust. This character they are zealous to acquire; and the rather, as they are subject to covet what belongs to another. When they see anything which pleases their fancy, they never cease importuning the owner till they get the whole or some part of it. However, in case of refusal, they never offer to take it by force. The Lanjans are extremely honest; so that there are no robbers to be met with throughout the whole kingdom."

Antonio De Faria, a much earlier Portuguese envoy, pirate, and private merchant, who visited the Far East in 1540, is reported as saying in one place that the Lao are very good-natured, but in another that they are brutal and uncivilised. He allows, however, that they are honest, and have no thieves among them; also that their colour is white, and the women very beautiful. It is not absolutely certain, however, that this gentleman ever saw the Lao.

The first account quoted, from Marini's pen, goes on to say that

"The Lanjans are very slothful and averse to business. They apply themselves to nothing but agriculture and fishing. They quite neglect all arts and sciences, so that they lead an indolent life, without troubling themselves about matters which require any great attention of the mind. They are much addicted to women, which is the bane of many, but their belief in witchcraft and magic is still more pernicious, especially as it prevails among people of rank."

These two statements, coming from the same pen, are a little difficult to reconcile with one another, since people who are slothful, thoughtless, and much addicted to women and witchcraft are not always likely to be sincere, of great integrity, and extremely honest. But it is clear from other evidence that the good Father Marini was, like most Jesuits, a trained and accurate observer, and we can only conclude that, having given so lavishly with one hand, he decided to redress the balance by taking back a little with the other.

The 'Universal History' is at great pains to digest, reconcile and correct all the various accounts given by divers travellers at different times regarding the extent of the Lanjan kingdom (i.e. the Southern Lao), and after making due allowance for all

considerations, comes to the conclusion that the Southern Lao country

“Will extend to near the nineteenth degree of latitude, and consequently, containing almost four degrees in extent from north to south, will have the larger half of Lao to its share (i.e. larger than the Northern Lao kingdom); as its breadth from west to east will be equal to that of the other (the Northern); but, in case we comprise Jangoma (Chiengmai) within its limits, the breadth will be augmented perhaps a hundred miles or more. Upon this footing, the province or kingdom of Lanjang will be near twice as large as the Northern Lao (i.e. the Shan States).”

Actually, if we consider the portions of Siam occupied now by the Lao (or Lanjans), we find that on the east Korāt, the southern extremity, lies on the 15th degree of north latitude, and Lūang Prabāng, the northern extremity, on the 20th degree; while, on the western side, Pitsanulōk, on the southern border, lies on the 17th degree, Chiengmai on the 19th, and Chieng Sên, the most northern point of Siam, at about 20½ degrees north. So that, in placing the borders of the southern Lao dominions between the 15th and the 19th degree north, the conclusions come to by the authors of the History are reasonably accurate and stamp the work as a careful study of the materials at their disposal at that time. It is true that they exclude Chieng Sên (which they write Kyangseng) from the Southern Lao State, but that is a pardonable error on their part, as they have been grossly misled in the matter of its position on the map by two Chinese travellers who started out on horseback from Chieng Rai in 1652 and, going north, took seven days to reach Chieng Sên, thus giving a totally wrong impression of the intervening distance, which is about 40 miles. I have walked it myself in two days.

Though they eventually include Jangoma (or Chiengmai) in the Southern Lao State, the authors are evidently puzzled over the differences between the Lanjans, the Lao and the Tai Yai, and conclude, as well they might, that they were entirely different peoples, but that Chiengmai was a vassal state of Lanjan. This latter is usually written ‘Lān Chāng,’ which words in the Tai language mean ‘the abode of elephants.’¹

Of the early history either of Chiengmai (or of Lānchāng) the authors know nothing, except that they were both formerly independent kingdoms. As regards Chiengmai, they are

¹ ‘Lān,’ as before, means, literally, a ‘courtyard.’

correct in saying that about 1556 it was conquered by the King of Ava and Pegu; that, soon after the year 1600,¹ it was wrested from Burma by Rajah Api (Narésuan), called by the Portuguese 'the black King' of Siam, but in 1615 regained by the King of Ava; that in 1657 it was again taken from the Burmese by the famous King Narai of Siam, but once more re-captured by the former after a few years of Siamese overlordship.

As regards the climate of the country, it is said to be more temperate than that of Tongking, and "exceedingly more healthful, so that one meets with old men, of a hundred and hundred and twenty years of age, who are as robust and vigorous as if they were but fifty." There will be found in this volume the portrait of an old gentleman who may well have 'capped the century,' but one must admit that, in spite of the smile, he looks his age.

Of the soil and the products of the country the chronicle, using Marini's tongue, speaks in eloquent terms. There is an abundance of salt; Gum Benjamin and Lac (Sticklac), both of which are referred to as 'drugs'; ivory and Unicorn's horns, by which latter is imagined rhinoceros; several mines of iron, lead and tin, as well as alluvial gold and silver.

The forests are said to be of great extent, yielding valuable timber, and the plains are 'enamelled' with a variety of flowers, with an abundance of honey, wax and cotton.

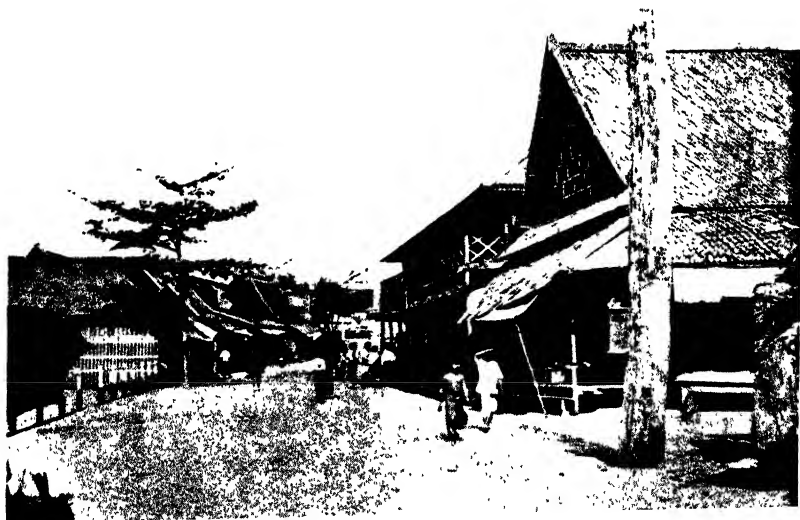
It is added that "the unicorn's horn is the thing most prized by the Lanjans from a belief, that whoever is possessed of one may command fortune." This belief still exists at the present day, and I was able myself, with a great deal of coaxing, to persuade an old lady to make me the happy possessor, for a consideration, of a small brass box for lip-salve with a piece of rhinoceros horn in the bottom of it. If it hasn't brought me good fortune, I am sure it has kept off a good deal of evil.

If we add his description of the character of the people to that of the country, it seems tolerably clear that Father Marini imagined he had reached 'the Promised Land.' But, as nearly always happens in such cases, there is a 'fly in the ointment,' and in Marini's case this is represented by the 'Talapoys' or Buddhist priests. In a long, fantastic, and altogether amazing description of the 'impious and idolatrous' religion of Buddha and of the Buddhist priestly order as seen in the Lao country, which is too long to enter into here in detail, Father Marini fairly lets himself go.

¹ Actually 1598.



THE RAILWAY BRIDGE AT CHOMPU', NEAR
CHIENGMAI.



According to him, "Although the priests of Lao are called Talapoy, a name borrowed from Pegu, yet, in the language of the country, they are named 'Fé.'¹ This class of men are reckoned the most perfidious in all the kingdom, as well as the dregs of the people. A lazy, slothful race, and the sworn enemies of industry. Their convents are so many seminaries of very profligate men, retreats of vagabonds and drones; in a word, schools of all sorts of wickedness and abominations." And the editor of the 'Universal History' adds this piquant reflection: "But it is a priest of another religion, *though not much different from theirs*, that speaks," evidently asking the reader to discount a portion of this heavy indictment on that account.

Apparently there were vast numbers of these Talapoys, and the King went about in great fear of them, always taking their side in the event of any quarrel arising between them and the lay people. The consequence was that the priests were practically immune from all process, either civil or criminal. Marini quotes the case of a man who was bastinadoed to death for not alighting from his palanquin in passing a priest because he was in a hurry, and he says that many praised the priest and regarded the murder as a generous action done by him in defence of his religion and order. He quotes another case of a Talapoy who in 1640 was detected in coining and uttering abundance of false money, and who was accordingly charged before the Council.

"But the King caused the indictment to be quashed by an order in which, after taxing the laity with avarice, he praised the piety of the Talapoys who, for want of being relieved in their necessities and finding their temples to be quite deserted, *had been obliged to invent a way of relieving themselves by coining money and, out of a little, making a great deal.*"

Marini adds that the Talapoys were greatly skilled in all kinds of magic and sorcery, which they practised upon the credulous people, particularly their benefactors, in order to obtain more from them; and that often the chief officers of State did not disdain to serve the Talapoys in the most servile offices.

In fact, good Father Marini has not a good word to say for the Buddhist priest as seen in the north of Siam, and we may well believe, after making all allowances for exaggeration and animosity on the part of a competitor ('whose religion was not much different from theirs'), that, in the state of civilisation in which the Lao found themselves at that time, the Order did

¹ A priest in Lao is called 'Tū Chao.'

attract a large number of indolent vagabonds, who saw in it a ready means of escaping not only all necessity to work, but also all punishment for whatever crimes they might care to commit. And also that, as their numbers gradually swelled, they became so powerful as to be able to exercise a strong influence upon the King.

Yet the Order must have had a considerable reputation for learning and piety, for we read, and Marini himself admits, that numbers of priests came from Siam and elsewhere to Chiengmai and Lūang Prabāng to study the principles and ethics of the religion and the Order, as they might come to a university.

In the same way, although Marini is at great pains to explain the doctrines and ethics of Shaka¹ (as he called Sakya Muni, the Buddha), it is fairly clear to the modern mind, that has studied Buddhism at all, that he really has no true conception of its fundamental tenets, and always has at the back of his mind that conception of, and contempt for, an 'impious and idolatrous religion,' which must for ever prevent him from reaching down to the bottom of the matter.

The 'Universal History' finishes its description of the Kingdom of the Lao by a short chapter on the Government and history of Lānchāng.

Of the King of Lānchāng the chronicle says in its inimitable way:

"Whatever other monarchs may think of the King of Lanjan, he thinks them all his inferiors; nor will yield the superiority to the emperor of China himself. To inspire his subjects with the greater veneration for his person, he appears but seldom in public and daily withdraws himself more and more, as if he was a species something more than human."

The which idea of the quasi-divinity of kings (not entirely disconnected with the fear of poison or assassination) has remained in all the countries of the Far East, Japan, China, Siam, Annam, down to the present century, and is only now beginning to lose its force, following on the eclipse of the 'Son of Heaven.'

It appears that "Justice is not altogether well administered; and, because crimes are very rarely committed here, many laws are not required. Besides, the will of the King stands in place of laws, where they are wanting; nor does he exert that authority to the detriment of his subjects" (except, of course, in the case of the Talapoys).

¹ 'Shaka' is the Japanese form of 'Sakya.'

And so we take leave of the Universal History. The temptation to browse still further among its fascinating pages is strong, but we have already, perhaps, given it more attention than our space allows, and we must reluctantly close its covers.

The second half of the seventeenth century saw the influx of large numbers of foreigners into Siam—English, French and Dutch in particular—many of whom have left behind graphic accounts of the Kingdom of Siam and the events they witnessed there. The French especially, Le Père Tachard, L'Abbé de Choisy, Le Chevalier de Forbin, and M. de la Loubère (the Ambassador), among others, have all given vivid descriptions of persons and incidents within their knowledge, but none of them visited the north of Siam, and they were so absorbed with the thrilling events which were happening in Ayudhya and Lopburi towards the close of the century, that they contribute very little to our knowledge of the Lao country.

After the great revolution of 1688 (curiously enough, the same year as that of the English revolution), when the French were driven out of the country, the famous Constance Falcon lost his life, and a usurper took possession of the Siamese throne on the death of old King Narai, the whole country was plunged in darkness again, and those Europeans who visited the country in the eighteenth century found their presence unwelcome, and the feeling against foreigners still strong and bitter.

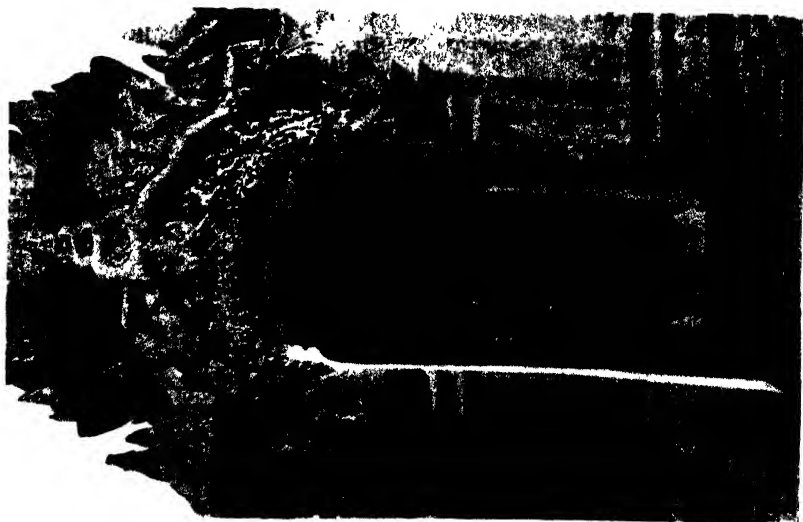
Then came the Burmese invasion, and the break up of the Ayudhyan Dynasty in 1767, which again threw the country into a state of confusion and gave little encouragement to European travellers to visit the country. In fact, it is not until 1836 that we come across any further record of interest relating to European intercourse with Chiengmai.

In his book on 'Further India,' Hugh Clifford (now Sir Hugh Clifford) describes how Captain, afterwards Major-General, McLeod left Moulmain in December 1836, in the company of a Dr. Richardson, who had already visited Chiengmai from Lower Burma three times before, and set out for the Siamese border. After crossing over into Siam they parted company, Richardson making for Ava through the country of the Red Karen, and McLeod going to Mûang Hôt on the Mè Ping. McLeod reached Lamphûn on January 9th, 1837, and Chiengmai about the 15th. He stayed there a fortnight and then, in spite of pressure from the Prince of Chierzmai (Phuttawong, who reigned from 1825 to 1846), who tried to dissuade him from going, he set out for Chieng Tung in the Shan States by way of Pûk Bong, and reached his destination on the 26th of

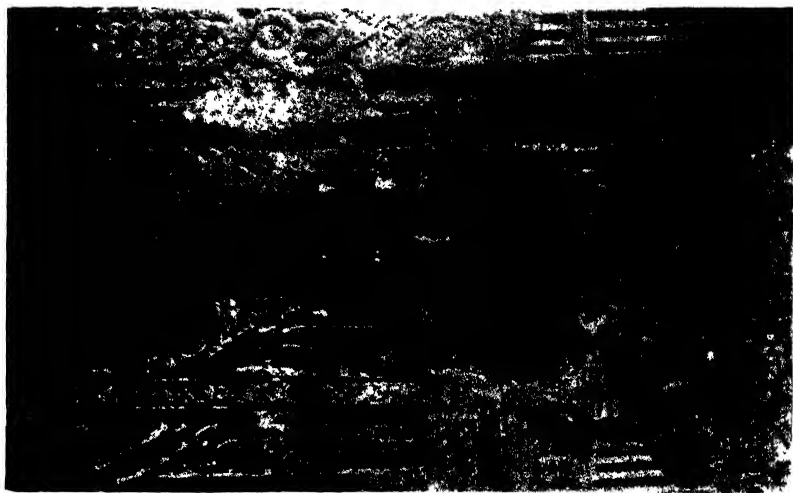
February, having crossed a stretch of country which Clifford says had never previously been traversed by a white man. After being refused permission by the Chinese authorities to enter Yunnan, he eventually returned to Chiengmai on the 18th of April. While in Chiengmai, he made strenuous endeavours to persuade the Prince to declare the road to Chieng Tung open to traffic for merchants from Moulmain, but it seems that, although his personality was an agreeable one and his intercourse with the Lao was friendly throughout, he failed entirely in the real object of his mission. Captain McLeod accordingly left Chiengmai and went on his homeward march by the road to Bangkok due south, eventually making his way back to Moulmein via Kawkareik. He cherished the hope that the trade with Yunnan might be tapped by a route going straight north from Lampāng, but nothing came of this suggestion. Now, however, after nearly a hundred years, his hopes are in a fair way of being fulfilled, as a metalled road is being constructed by the Royal Railway Department from Lampāng to Chieng Rai about 150 miles long, and this should undoubtedly give a great impetus to the trade with Chieng Tung and Yunnan.

In December, 1859, another European visit to Chiengmai was paid, this time by Sir Robert Schomburgk, F.R.S., then British Consul at Bangkok, but he has left only a meagre account of his journey. He went as far as Raheng by boat, and then continued the journey on elephants. He passed through Lamphūn and reached Chiengmai on February 11th, the whole journey occupying just two months. From Chiengmai he went by the trade route to Moulmein, and Clifford says that he was one of the earliest, if not the very first, European to reach the Gulf of Bengal from the Gulf of Siam, via Chiengmai, since the days of the ill-fated factor, Thomas Samuel, at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

This brings us down to the time of the first visits paid to the north by the American missionaries in the sixties of the last century, to the death in 1870 of Kāwilōrot, the last real King of Chiengmai, and the appointment of a resident Siamese High Commissioner. The story of these happenings is told in another chapter, but Dr. McGilvary says that the authority soon acquired by the High Commissioner resulted in a silent revolution, and the power gradually passed from the hands of the Princes of Chiengmai. The titular 'Chao Chīwit' (Lord of Life) was allowed to retain this honour during his lifetime, but after his death his successor was only known as 'Chao Lūang' (Chief), and from this time the Lao country ceased to be a feudal



THE GATEWAY AT LAMPANG LUANG.



THE RECESSED BRONZE BUDDHA AT
VASSINCO

dependency and almost imperceptibly became an integral portion of the Kingdom of Siam.

In January, 1874, the first treaty with a Foreign Power relating especially to the North of Siam was signed at Calcutta by Plenipotentiaries representing the King of Siam and the Government of India; and there is little doubt that this treaty was the direct result of a visit paid by the young King Chulalongkorn to India in January, 1872, four years after his accession to the throne in 1868.

The treaty, which sought to promote commercial intercourse between Burma and the territories of Chiengmai, Lakon and Lampoonchi (sic), dealt with various subjects, and began by stating that the King of Siam would cause the Prince of Chiengmai to maintain, on the Siamese side of the border, a sufficient police force for the prevention of murder, robbery, dacoity, and other heinous crimes.

It then provided for the mutual extradition of offenders under certain conditions laid down, and appointed the British officer in the Yoonzaleen district of Burma, who was given Consular powers, as the authority to deal with all British offenders so extradited.

It was laid down that due protection should be afforded to merchants of either contracting State in the territory of the other, but that all British subjects entering the three districts mentioned should be provided with passports; and then came the most important clause of the treaty, namely, that the King of Siam should appoint judges at Chiengmai to investigate and decide civil claims of British subjects holding passports against Siamese subjects, and vice versa, *provided that the British subject concerned consented to the jurisdiction of the Court*. If he did not, the case would be tried either by the British Consul in Bangkok, or by the British officer in the Yoonzaleen district.

This clause was followed by another important one relating to the timber business, then beginning to attract attention among foreigners in the North. Definite rules and regulations were laid down governing the purchase, cutting or girdling of timber by British subjects in the territories mentioned, by which all agreements with owners of forests had to be executed in duplicate, and sealed by a Siamese judge and by the Prince of Chiengmai. A wistful note was introduced into the treaty by the remark that "the said judges and Prince of Chiengmai shall endeavour to prevent owners of forests from executing agreements with more than one party for the same timber or forests!"

The last clause in the body of the treaty stipulated that British

subjects entering Siamese territory from Burma should pay the duties lawfully prescribed on all merchandise.

Finally it was agreed that seven years after the date of its coming into force, but subject to twelve months' notice, the treaty should be subject to revision.

This treaty represents the first attempt made by the Siamese Government to introduce its new protégé to the world at large, and denotes also the first attempt to exercise direct control over the affairs of the Prince of Chiengmai.

The treaty, which at the best could only be of a transitory nature, served its purpose for nine years, and then in 1883 was replaced by a new treaty, this time between Great Britain herself and Siam, which marked another stage in the progress of the north.

The treaty of 1883, in abrogating that of 1874, provided for the appointment of a British Consul or Vice Consul to reside at Chiengmai. It also provided for the appointment of one or more Siamese Commissioners and Judges (a combined appointment) to Chiengmai, who should exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction in *all* cases, to which British subjects were parties, according to Siamese law; with the proviso that the Consul might be present at the trial and 'make any suggestions which he might think proper in the interests of justice'; and with the further proviso that, at any time before judgment, the Consul might, in cases where the accused (or defendant) was a British subject or both parties were British subjects, evoke the case from the Siamese Court and try it himself in the British Consular Court at Chiengmai. All appeals were to be sent to Bangkok, to be disposed of there by the Siamese authorities in consultation with the British Consul-General, the former or the latter to have the final word according as the accused (or defendant) was Siamese or British. It then embodied the clauses of the 1874 treaty relating to the mutual extradition of offenders charged with heinous crimes, and also those governing the future purchase, cutting, and girdling of timber in the forests of the three districts mentioned; and it added in the same wistful manner as before that the Siamese and local authorities would do their best to prevent the owners of forests from executing agreements with more than one party for the same timber or forests.

As the local Chiefs had always been the great offenders in this latter respect, and had been the cause of endless litigation in the past, which had all had to be sent to Bangkok for trial, the treaty made a definite attempt to bring these local Chiefs to heel, and to provide on the spot some means of assuring the

British companies and individuals engaged in the teak trade a measure of fair play in their dealings with them.

The first Consular appointment made was that of Mr. E. B. Gould as Vice-Consul at Chiengmai; while at the same time a half-brother of the King of Siam, Prince Sonapandit,¹ went and took up his residence in Chiengmai, to lend prestige to the presence of the High Commissioner, and possibly to be at hand to help the British Vice-Consul in case of need.

The Court so set up in Chiengmai was the first International Court to be established in Siam; and the same system was incorporated in the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909,² when the British Court for Siam in Bangkok was abolished, and all British subjects in Siam came under the jurisdiction of the Siamese Courts. Under the latter treaty, until the appearance of all the various Civil and Criminal Codes, the Consul had the right to sit on cases concerning British subjects registered before March 10th, 1909, and to evoke a case at any time before judgment, if he saw fit to do so; and, moreover, if any case went to the Siamese Appeal Court, he could attach a written opinion to the file.

In 1883, therefore, relations between the north of Siam and Europe entered an entirely new phase, and owing to the judgment shown by the Siamese Government in their selection of officials for the northern posts, and to the goodwill shown by the British Consular officers, these relations have ever since been of the happiest, both to the satisfaction of the British companies working in the northern forests and of the thousands of Burmese and Shan British subjects earning their living in the north of Siam, and also to the great advantage of the administration and country generally.

During the past forty years there has only been one cloud which might have resulted in a serious 'downpour,' and that was a Shan rising in the rainy season of 1902 on the Lampāng-Phrê side against alleged cruelties and injustice on the part of the local Siamese officials. But, owing to the timely interference of Mr. T. H. Lyle (now Sir Harold Lyle, K.B.E., C.M.G.), the British Vice-Consul at Nān, who came to Phrê and prevented a junction between two different bands by firmly ordering the Phrê band to pile their arms (which they did), and also to prompt action on the part of a Siamese gendarmerie force under Danish

¹ Prince Bidyalab.

² This Treaty has now been superseded by a new Treaty, granting the Siamese Courts full rights of jurisdiction over British subjects. All the other important Powers have made similar Treaties with Siam.

officers, the affair was nipped in the bud and quashed without very great difficulty. One Danish officer, Captain Jensen, was, however, unfortunately killed in one of the skirmishes that took place.

The treaty of 1883 was the means of attracting foreign enterprise to the north, and the next fifteen years saw the establishment of four British companies, in addition to one Danish and one French, who had obtained concessions from the Siamese Government for the purpose of working the teak forests in Northern Siam.

The Borneo Company, Limited, the first British firm to be established in Siam after the Bowring Treaty of 1855, now has stations at Chiangmai, Lampāng, Bān Nā above Raheng, and Mūang Fāng, on the northern border, at which latter place they have constructed a light railway for the extraction of the timber.

The Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, Limited, has stations at Chiangmai, Lampāng and Phrê, which latter has recently been closed; as well as stations at Mē Hong Sôn and Mūang Yūam in the Salwin watershed.

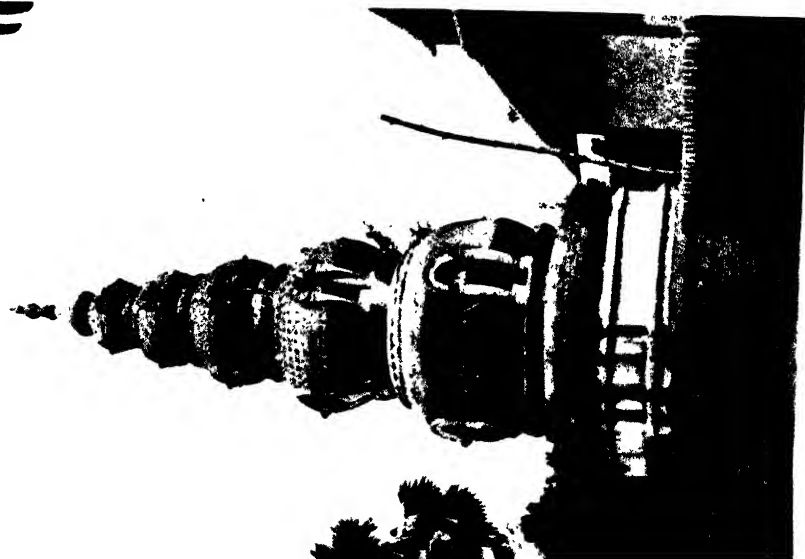
The Anglo-Siam Corporation, Limited, has stations at Lampāng, Mūang Ngao, and Mūang Pōng, at which place they have also constructed a light railway for extraction purposes.

Messrs. Leonowens, Limited, has stations at Lampāng and Mūang Thôn. The formation of this firm was due to the energy and foresight of the famous Mr. Louis Leonowens, whose mother was governess to the late King Chulalongkorn, and who himself was brought up in the company of the King.

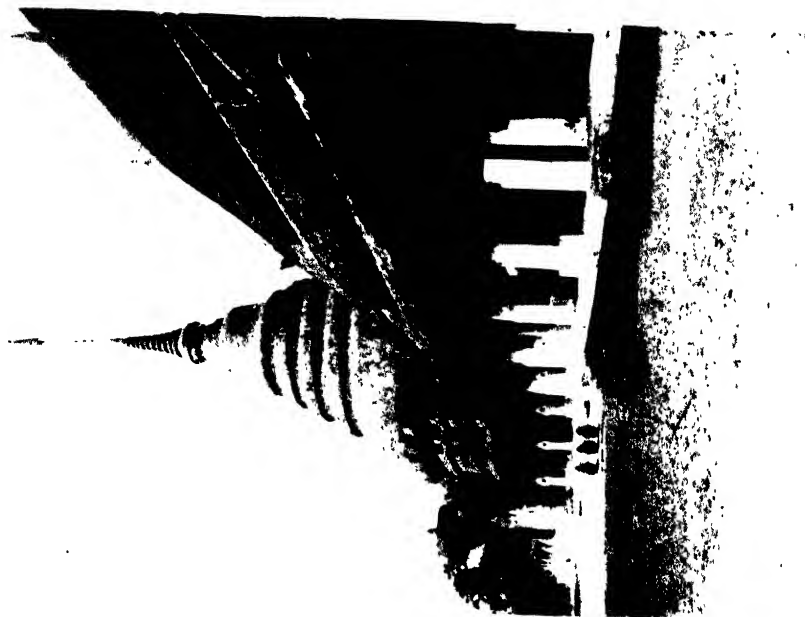
The Danish East Asiatic Company, Limited, has a station at Phrê; while the French East Asiatic Company is working near the Mēkhōng on the banks of its tributary, the Mē Khōk, with headquarters at Chiang Rai, but their timber has in the past all been floated down the Mēkhōng and thus to Saigon in French Indo-China, and does not at present touch the Mēnam Chao Phya or Bangkok.

Chiangmai, being the capital of the North, is naturally looked upon as the head-station by the first two companies mentioned, and during the last few years has made rapid strides, under the care of a municipality, in sanitation, town-planning, and road-making. The city lends itself to this, as it has a singularly beautiful setting, with its hill, Doi Suthép, standing sentinel over it; and the Gymkhana Club on the east bank of the river Mē Ping, which was formed long ago by the European community, has many of the features and much of the charm of an English park.

"



ANCIENT PAGODA OF UNIQUE DESIGN ON THE
OUTSKIRTS OF CHIENGMAI.



A SIDE-VIEW OF THE TEMPLE WITH PAGODA AT
LAMPANG LUANG.

Lampāng can never rank on the same plane as Chiengmai for beauty; but it is also dominated by a hill, though not so high as Doi Suthép, and the river Mê Wāng running through it gives it a sufficiently picturesque appearance. There being four British firms established there (with the American Mission as well), Lampāng has now probably the most numerous European community in the north of Siam. And here it must be said that this volume would not be complete without a tribute to the exceptionally fine body of men which the teak trade seems to draw from the shores of Great Britain. The life is naturally a lonely one, most of it being spent in the jungle in charge of a gang of forest coolies; but it has its attractions, and the annual Christmas meetings of the two main stations, held at Chiengmai and Lampāng alternately, when every conceivable kind of sport and amusement is given a free rein, are worth going a long way to attend. Strong and firm in body and mind, these men know not only how to handle the mixture of Lao, Khāmū and Shan foresters under their charge, but also how to maintain the friendliest relations with the local Chiefs and resident Siamese officials, with the result that the feelings of the people generally towards the European in the north are probably happier than those of the brown towards the white folk in any other part of the globe. These men of our blood are a great and valuable asset, especially at such a time as this when the brown man's respect for the white is diminishing year by year; and this humble tribute of mine is gladly paid to a small band of stalwarts, who maintain the best traditions of their race in Northern Siam. May they long continue to do so.

There are, of course, certain obvious dangers in such a life as these men lead. One of these periodically causes an outburst in the home Press, and it is not so long since 'Western men and Eastern morals' was one of the topics of the day. As a result of that agitation the Government of Burma took very drastic action and laid it down that the only form of union that would be permitted between a white civil servant in that country and a Burmese lady, woman, or girl, was marriage. There is no authority in Siam to ordain or to enforce such a rigid measure as this, nor is the need for such action fortunately present. It is certainly not my intention to pass any moral strictures, or even to express any sentiment on this thorny question (knowing the many sides there are to it), beyond a great feeling of sympathy for many of the children of the irregular unions formed.

There seem to be only two alternatives in such cases—either to take the children to Europe and leave them there for good—

to let them be absorbed by the people of the country from which they come. This latter alternative is especially possible in Siam, and a number of Eurasians, who have identified themselves entirely with the Siamese, have carved out useful, even brilliant careers.

In Siam, as far as the past is concerned, some of the European firms themselves actually deserve the chief measure of blame in this matter, by their obstinate and reactionary attitude towards marriage on the part of any of their staff except the 'barra sahib'; but fortunately times have changed, and now, both in Bangkok and in the north of Siam, few obstacles are placed in the way of a man marrying one of his own kind after a reasonable period of service as a 'cub.' In fact, conditions have changed to such an extent in the last ten years (with the particular aid of the war) that, among the men who have served in Siam more than five or six years, marriage has almost become the rule, and not the exception. And a good thing, too.

The other danger, which is rather more subtle in its working, is the lack of mental exercise, and the possibility of stagnation. It requires a great effort, which many of the best successfully make, for a man in the jungle, far away from all contact with our own civilisation, to keep in touch with the outside world, and all the currents and streams of thought that are affecting it. But it is absolutely necessary for the man's own salvation, and if a wise selection is made of the great number of books, newspapers, and periodicals which are being issued to-day, it can be done. The Germans have an exceedingly true proverb, 'Aller Anfang ist schwer,' which means 'Don't be afraid of using your brain'; but once the plunge is taken, the mind soon becomes stimulated by the healthy exercise and cries out for more. There is, besides, a great field open for ethnological study in the north of Siam, and I can confidently recommend this form of mental exercise as an excellent cure for boredom or 'the blues.'

All this, you will say, has nothing whatever to do with the teak trade. Well, may be it has, may be not; but, in any event, let us return to our subject proper and consider how the industry stands at the moment. Unfortunately, it cannot be said to be in a thriving condition, and it is freely admitted, among circles that know, that, as far as the teak industry is concerned, 'the good old days have gone.'

In the early days, before the administration of Siam was thoroughly overhauled by the late King Chulalongkorn and his brilliant adjutant, His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, the felling of teak trees was entirely indiscriminate, and every

trunk which could conceivably yield a plank or even a butt-end was hewn down and cast into the streams. But in 1896, the Siamese Government were fortunate enough to secure the loan of the services of Mr. H. Slade from the Imperial Forest Service in India, and it is from this date that forestry may be said to have begun in Siam. The Siam Directory for 1909 states that, under the advice of this officer, who was one of exceptional ability and force of character, the following measures were adopted by the Government to protect the valuable teak forests of Siam:

(i) The establishment of a Forest Department, with a European staff of officers, recruited as far as possible from the Imperial and Provincial services of India and Burma, not the least important of whose duties was to be the training of selected Siamese youths, with a view to the latter filling responsible positions in the Department in the future.

(ii) The promulgation of a number of Royal Decrees by His Majesty, providing for the better protection and control of the forests, and absolutely prohibiting any working thereof except under a lease.

(iii) The inspection and survey of all leased forests by forest officers with a view to ascertaining the future possibilities of the forests, and also further periodical inspection to ensure a strict observance of the conditions of leases.

(iv) The training of selected Siamese at the Indian Forest School at Dehra Dun.

In 1897, with the consent of the lessees, a new form of lease was substituted for that under which they had hitherto worked, the conditions of the new lease embodying the more important restrictions necessary for the future welfare of the forests, among which may be mentioned the raising of the minimum girth from 51 inches to $76\frac{1}{2}$ inches at a height of 4 feet 6 inches from the ground. In India, I understand, the limit is 7 feet at a height of 5 feet from the ground.

In 1900 most of the old leases expired, and a further new form of lease was brought into force for such forests as the Government decided should still be worked. This form provided for the closing of one half of the original areas for a period of fifteen years, and prohibited any further girdling by lessees themselves. The royalty was also raised from Rs. 4.25 a log to Rs. 10 per large log, and Rs. 6 per small log.

Further new leases came into force in 1925, the chief effect of which is to raise the amount of royalty payable on the timber floated down. Such royalties are no longer payable in rupees, and all payments must now be made in ticals.

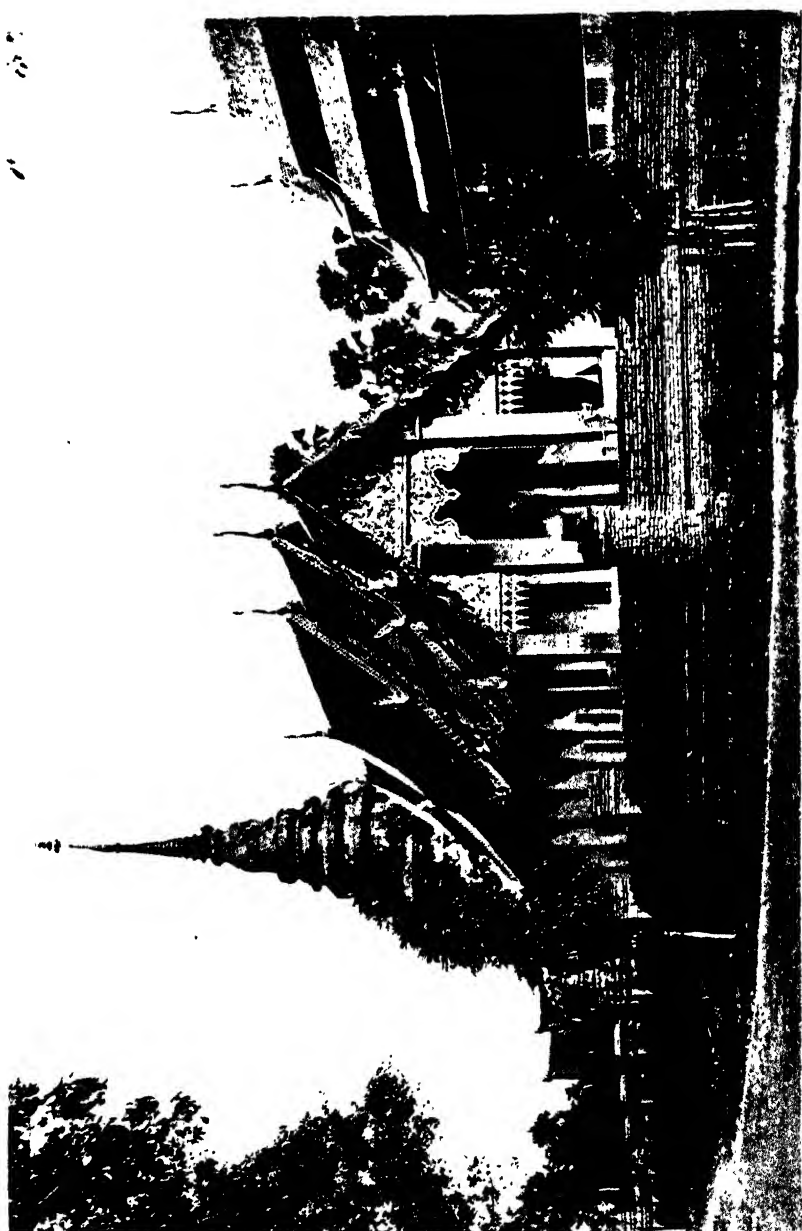
The wise measures adopted by the Government were the means of producing in a short time a very thriving trade in teak, and the last thirty years have witnessed the growth of an industry of great mutual profit both to the firms and to the Government.

In his work in organising the Department, Slade naturally met with a good deal of opposition from the local northern Chiefs, on whose preserves he had naturally to encroach to a large extent; but in the end, after a hard fight, he won his battle, and this victory weakened the position of the Chiefs, who never regained their former prestige. Slade may be said, therefore, to have played an important part in consolidating the Siamese Kingdom, and to have been of great assistance to the Government in this regard.

Slade, who had been trained at the Forest School at Nancy in France (this was before the establishment of the college at Cooper's Hill), left Siam in 1901 and returned to Burma, where he died in 1905.

I am not competent to give a detailed account of the teak industry, but for the general reader it may be briefly said that when teak trees, which are found scattered through the forest and do not grow in clumps or plantations, have been girdled, i.e. ringed with an axe at the required height, they are left for a considerable period, one or two years, for the sap to run out. The trees are then felled and dragged by an elephant into the nearest creek. When the head waters rise in September or October, the logs float out into a larger creek, and thus, moving on, season after season, eventually come into the main river, at some place on which each company has a rafting station. After the logs have been made up into rafts, they are floated down the Mê Ping, Mê Wăng, Mê Yom, or Mê Năn, as the case may be, until they reach the duty station at the junction of Pāknampo, where all the rivers became one, the Menam Chao Phya. The royalty on the timber is paid at Pāknampo to the Government, and the rafts are then floated down the Menam Chao Phya until they finally reach the saw-mills at Bangkok, where the logs are converted into planks, scantlings, squares, and shingles, for export to India, China, Great Britain, or wherever else a demand may arise.

It is said that the average period, from the time when the tree is girdled till the time when it reaches Bangkok, is about



five years; and that the long immersion in the water is the means of seasoning the log and making it one of the finest woods that is known to man.

The teak trade has flourished so well, and has for so long been looked upon as a staple industry, that it is difficult for the ordinary layman to realise the untoward tendencies which may be showing themselves, such tendencies only taking shape in a slow and almost imperceptible manner. But the following extract which has been taken from a Review of the Trade of Siam for 1923-24, published in 'The Record,' the official commercial journal of the Siamese Government, will indicate clearly the present state of the industry:

"There is no doubt that the teak trade of this country is not in a healthy state. Going back as far as B.E. 2451 (1908-09) we find an export of 77,000 tons, of 76,000 tons in B.E. 2452, and 89,000 tons in B.E. 2453, declining to 47,000 tons in 2457, and reaching the lowest point in 2461 (1918-19), which showed an export of 37,000 tons.

"Then followed two 'boom' years, when the old time figures were nearly reached, viz. 70,000 tons in 2462, and 71,600 tons in 2463, which gave a much-needed fillip to the industry. But thereafter a decline set in again, and in 2465 the export only reached about 52,000 tons. In 2466, it is true, there was a slight improvement, which it is hoped will be maintained; but it cannot be said that the outlook is hopeful, since the quality of the timber is not so good as formerly, and prices are almost identical with those prevailing before the war, in spite of the considerable advance in price of almost every other commodity.

"As has been stated in 'The Record' (October, 1923), and as the figures show, the European market is lifeless, and prices are altogether unattractive, due to the unsettled conditions prevailing in Europe. At the same time, the possibility of a general diminution in the consumption of teak cannot be overlooked. During the war substitutes for teak had to be found, which are now proving more economical to use, while the reduction of naval armaments must also play a part.

"Deliveries to India are difficult to make, owing to the competition of Burma teak, which escapes the import duty of 15 per cent., pays less freight, and has the advantage of the rupee exchange. In fact, it is said that exports to India often show a loss on cost. There is usually a fair demand

from China and Hongkong, but it is often for inferior quality timber, which is not very profitable to ship. At the close of the year 2466 (March, 1924) it was stated that the various markets for teak remained as stagnant as ever, and the saw-millers, in order to keep their sheds clear, had no other recourse than to continue shipping inferior timber to the different Eastern markets on consignment, usually suffering considerable losses on realisation."

This is no doubt a gloomy picture, and the optimists will discount it considerably. It need not be feared that the industry will suddenly die out altogether; indeed, with the recent opening of new areas which have been closed for the last fifteen years, the companies can and will carry on for the next fifteen years, though not on the same profitable basis as before. But the sands are gradually running out, and it behoves those interested, whether official or individual, who have long heads and clear foresight, to think out in their own minds what is going to happen at the end of the next fifteen years, and what, if anything, is going to take the place of teak.

CHAPTER IV

The Journey from Bangkok to Chiengmai, the Capital of Northern Siam

I DOUBT if many folk are as yet fully aware of the rapid strides that have been made in opening up communications in the interior of Siam and with the outside world since the beginning of this century. It may be best emphasized by a concrete instance. Take the four points, Singapore, Penang, Bangkok, and Chiengmai. Singapore is about 500 miles from Penang; Penang is about 700 miles from Bangkok; and Chiengmai is 450 miles due north of Bangkok. Twenty years ago, to go from Singapore to Chiengmai would have occupied first of all four days in reaching Bangkok by sea, and then anything from three to six weeks in going from Bangkok to Chiengmai by river-boat, according to the time of the year and the state of the water in the river. In 1867 Dr. McGilvary, the missionary, took three months.

It is now actually possible to travel the whole of these 1650 miles by train, and by leaving Singapore on Thursday morning to arrive in Chiengmai the following Monday evening at 6 p.m., thus achieving comfortably in five days what it would have taken at least a month to do previously. In January, 1922, a through express service was inaugurated between Bangkok and Penang, leaving Penang on Friday morning and arriving in Bangkok on Saturday evening at 7 p.m.; and in November, 1922, a through express was established between Bangkok and Chiengmai, leaving Bangkok twice a week, on Sundays and Wednesdays, at 4.30 p.m., and arriving at Chiengmai the following day at 6 p.m.

Even in 1913, when I first made the journey to Chiengmai, it took me eleven days to complete it. Railhead had only reached Dén Chai, a village near Phrê, and I had to walk the remaining hundred and twenty miles. I am glad now I had to do so.

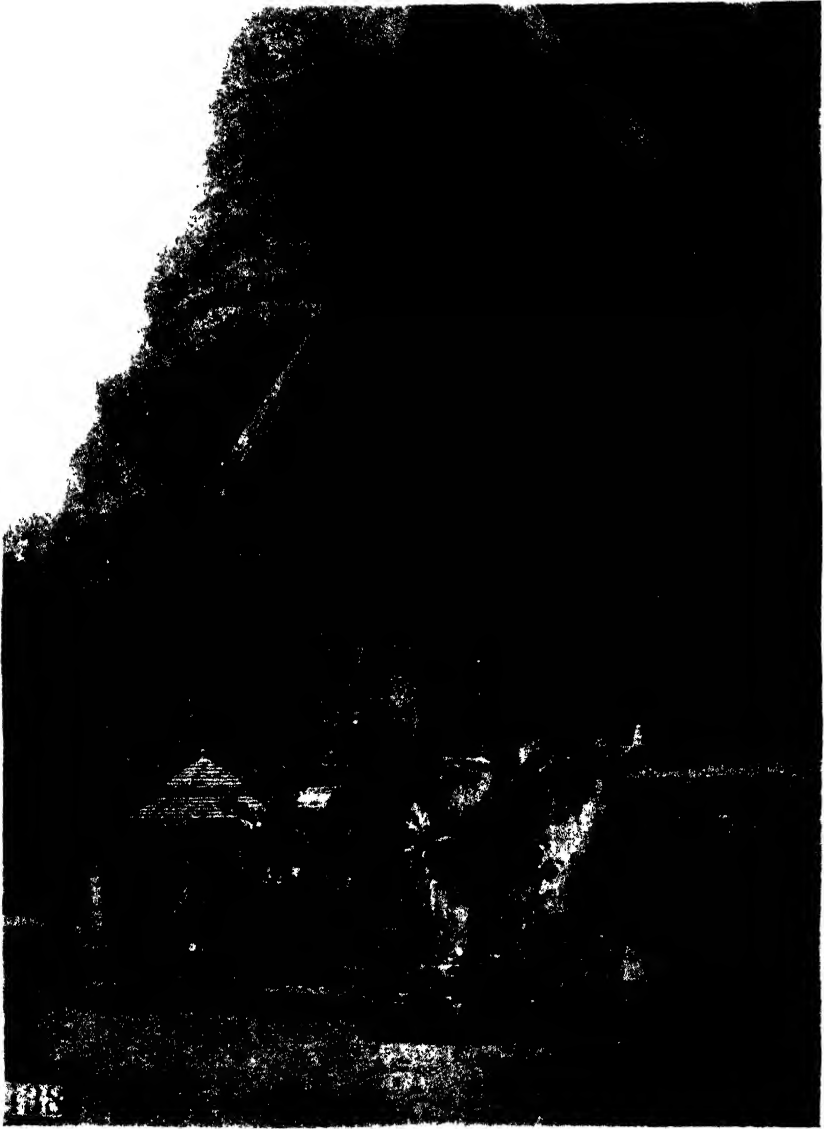
The construction of the northern line which, from Ban Phaji (the junction for Kōrāt), was begun in 1898, has been the labour of many years, and in the northern section the engineering difficulties to be overcome have been considerable.

The chief obstacle, without doubt, was a range of hills between

Lampāng and Chiengmai, through which it was necessary to bore a tunnel some three-quarters of a mile long. The supervision of this line was originally in German hands until 1917, when Siam declared war against Germany. It was then taken over by the Siamese themselves, and a Siamese Commissioner-General was appointed to administer both the Northern Line and the Southern Line, which, as has just been indicated, connects with the Federated Malay States Railway System, running to Penang and Singapore. Both lines, which have been built partly from revenue and partly by means of loans, are efficiently administered, and the Northern Line already shows net earnings of six per cent. on the capital outlay, that is, without reckoning interest on loans. The Southern Line, owing to a want of population and the consequent lack of development, is still backward, and at present shows net earnings of only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.¹ (with the same proviso); but it will also, without doubt, do much better in the future, when the country is more opened up, and the mining and other industries have attracted a larger population. There are still a considerable number of Europeans, chiefly British, employed in the Royal Railway Department, but, considering that the administration is a State one, the result hitherto has been a great credit to the Government, and to H.R.H. the Prince of Kambaeng Bejra, the Commissioner-General (now Minister of Commerce and Communications), who takes pride in the work he is creating, and a great interest in the economic development of his country.

At the time I made my first journey north, the trains were not permitted to run at night, and the whole of a scorching day, from seven to seven, was spent in travelling through an extensive plain, with intervals of towns and villages, and here and there to the East a ridge of hills in the distance, standing out sharp and clear, and coming down to an abrupt end on the plain, like some forest-clad island in the sea. In fact, it did not need a great stretch of imagination to realise that this plain had once been covered by the sea, and that the sharply-outlined hills had actually been islands dotted about here and there. Thompson in his delightful book on Southern Siam, 'Lotus Land,' says that at no very distant geological epoch the gulf of Siam extended far beyond its present limits, and the whole plain has been deposited by the great rivers, Mē Ping, Mē Yom and Mē Nān, all of which form the single river, Mēnam Chao Phya, at Pāknampo, and which come down heavily charged with the

¹ In B.E. 2467 (1924-25) the net earnings had increased to 3 per cent., and 1925-26 will show better results still.



FRONT OF ANCIENT TEMPLE WITH RUINED PAGODA AT CHIENGMAL.

detritus of the hills. It has been said that the tide came up as far as the town of Lopburi even down to the time of King Narai, whose reign ended in 1688 A.D.

Leaving Bangkok early in the morning we presently passed the King's summer palace at Bāng Pā In, on an island in the river, and soon after caught a glimpse of the ruins at Ayudhya, the old capital of Siam, which was finally sacked and destroyed by the Burmese in 1767 A.D.

Besides the great bronze Buddha, said to be some 80 feet high, there are many things of interest to be seen at Ayudhya, especially now that the Archaeological Service has taken the ruins in hand and begun to excavate in the old city. The Museum in the Palace is, for instance, well worth a visit, and the sculptures in stone to be seen, arranged in the cloisters, form an admirable collection.

Another two hours of travelling brought us to Lopburi, now also in the hands of the Archaeological Department, and of the greatest interest from the historical point of view.

Lopburi, after being first a Môn and then a Khmer capital city, was used in Ayudhyan times as a summer haunt of the King, and here the famous King Narai held his court in the latter half of the seventeenth century and received the Ambassadors of King Louis XIV. Here, too, the Greek, Constance Falcon, rose to power and fame as King Narai's Foreign Minister, but finally lost his head at the hands of the Siamese noble, who usurped the throne at the latter's death. The remains of Falcon's house and compound are still standing, as well as the King's palace, and a day may be well spent in visiting them; as also the beautiful temples of 'Sām Yôt,' or 'Three Spires,' and 'Mahā Tāt,' which are built almost entirely of laterite, and date from Khmer times of the tenth and eleventh centuries. It was in a trench dug outside the walls of 'Wāt Mahā Tāt' that I found some fragments of Sung porcelain, a fine grained paste covered with that thick, dull and unctuous glaze which is now rightly so much sought after by collectors.

I might also record the fact that along the roads and paths, which are now being newly dug, it is possible to pick up many fragments of early 'blue and white,' as well as numerous specimens of 'Sawankalōk' ware.

Later on in the afternoon we reached the town of Pāknampo, where, as already mentioned, the Government has established its duty station for the payment of royalties on the teak wood grown in the northern forests.

As far as Pāknampo, most of the land visible from the

railway appeared to be under rice cultivation, but for the last hour or so of the journey to Pitsanulōk, the end of the first day's travel, the cultivated area grew less and less, and we passed through wide stretches of swampy marshland, untilled and undrained.

The six Circles of Bangkok, Ayudhya, Nakōn Chaisī, Prachin, Rajaburi, and Nakōn Sāwān (which are called the Inner Circles), together with the Circle of Pitsanulōk, supply practically the whole of the rice exported from Bangkok (which forms over 80 per cent. of the total exports); and the area under cultivation in these Circles, amounting to some four million acres, produces a crop varying from two million to two million and a half tons, according to the fortunes of the season. Of this amount as much as twelve to fourteen hundred thousand tons will, as a rule, be available for export.

This plain is, therefore, literally the heart of the country, for if the rice crop fails through floods or drought, and the export has to be prohibited, as happened for instance in 1919, the country is brought face to face with an economic disaster of the first order.

It is, to my mind, essential that the country should find some other staple crop, which will not interfere with the cultivation of rice, but at the same time will provide the country with what may be called an insurance against disaster, if the rice crop fails, as it may at any time.

It is true that during the last ten years the question of irrigation has been taken seriously in hand by the Government, and the first big scheme, i.e. the barrage across the Pasāk river, designed to water about five hundred square miles of the Rangsit area near Bangkok, was recently completed and opened by His late Majesty at a cost of some fifteen million ticals (£1,360,000 at the present rate of exchange). But the people of the South do not yet understand irrigation, and it will take many years to teach them how to use the water properly.

But irrigation or no irrigation, another staple crop is needed, and everything appears to me to point to cotton. There are large tracts of land in Central, Northern and Eastern Siam suitable for its cultivation. It is grown on land not so suitable for rice, is easy to cultivate, and samples of Siam cotton, grown from imported seed, have already met with a favourable reception on the London market. Moreover the world is crying for cotton, and now that teak shows signs of a steady decline, it appears to me that the time has come to consider this question of cotton-growing very seriously. But this is by the way.

Our stopping place for that day was Pitsanulōk, which is indeed a dreary spot. There is a short road from the station to the river, with a squalid market at the end of it, and a road about a mile long on either side of the river itself. That is the whole of Pitsanulōk as a town.

It stands high in the estimation of the Siamese, however, and pilgrimages are made to it frequently by high Princes and officials; for it contains one of the oldest temples in the land, in the Khmer style—and inside the temple itself may be seen the most famous image of the Buddha in Siam, said to be about 600 years old. It is rightly held in veneration, for it is certainly a most beautiful image, and few visitors can resist the mysterious charm of its setting, or the calm and holy air it breathes. Yet, apart from the Buddha, I shall always associate Pitsanulōk with another beautiful sight.

I was once walking along the river bank, and as I came to a deep cleft I disturbed a company of kingfishers perched quietly on the ground. As I approached they all flew out, and to my astonishment I saw at least fifty of them, all gold, and green, and blue in the sunlight, circling over the water and uttering shrill little cries of alarm.

At Pitsanulōk it was necessary to find quarters for the night in the station rest-house, and to continue the journey the following morning.

The scenery from Pitsanulōk to Dén Chai was entirely different in character from that of the previous day, and was a source of unalloyed delight to one coming from the flat and uninteresting south.

As far as Utaradit the gradient is small, but after leaving that garrison town, the train goes up and up, winding slowly round the hillsides; on the one side are deep ravines, densely covered with jungle, and on the other, towering above in sharp contrast, a mass of sheer rock. All the while one is drinking a draught of the fresh mountain air, and breathing the scent of the jungle flowers. Innumerable butterflies of every hue and size swarm on the permanent way, to an extent that, standing on the steps of the carriage, it is possible to catch them with one's hand; and the dense undergrowth of the jungle around conjures up visions of tiger, deer and elephant—visions, however, which do not materialise, as those animals have long since overcome their resentment to the railway and now maintain a dignified seclusion.

At Bān Tān, just above Utaradit, we reached the lowest outposts of the Lao people, and I was filled with admiration at a

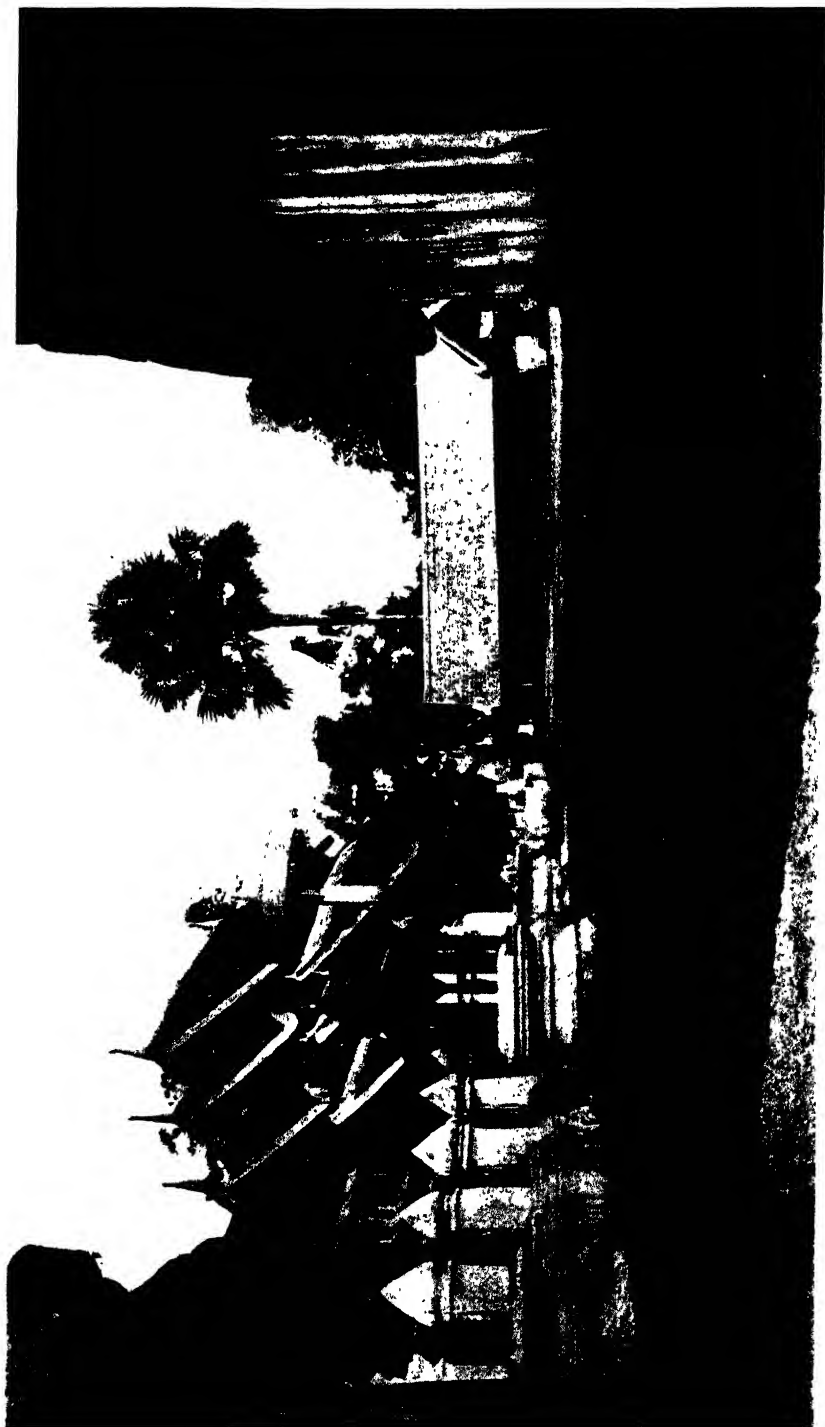
bevy of Lao beauties who had come down from their village to the station to see the 'wonderful' train. They were dressed in the Lao 'Sîn,' or skirt (of red and black bands, as worn by the women of Phrê), with a close-fitting bodice above, and had their hair dressed in layers, rather like the coils of a snake, with a red flower gracefully worn at the side. They laughed and chattered naturally and gaily, and seemed to possess a temperament different from that of the ordinary southern peasant, who is as a rule reserved and shy.

The journey came to an end all too soon, and we descended at Dén Chai punctually at noon. Here, by previous agreement, I found awaiting me a travelling companion, Mr. Wood, the British Vice-Consul at Lampāng (now Consul-General at Chiangmai), who had been visiting Mûang Thôn, a small village in the neighbourhood, and was then staying at Phrê on his return to Lampāng. As my way to Chiangmai lay through Lampāng, we agreed to travel that part of the journey together.

There is now a good metalled road covering the fourteen miles between Dén Chai and the town of Phrê, under the charge of the Royal Railway Department, but at the time of which I write this road was more a grassy track than anything else, extremely bumpy in the dry season, and a quagmire in the rains, the period of my visit. We found a motor-bus plying for trade, and hired it for the ride, but it was a very old one and came near to proving our undoing, since at the foot of a hill it stuck in a morass, the left wheel spun away, and the suddenness of the shock shot us all out of the car. Fortunately we escaped with only a few bruises, and thought no more about it, for if one travels by motor-car in the interior of Siam, one must be prepared for these mishaps. The only unpleasantness was that we had to walk the remaining four miles in the heat of the afternoon.

We stayed at Phrê for two nights, just time enough to engage sufficient mules and carriers to take my baggage through to Chiangmai. These, to the number of ten carriers and four mules, were obtained without much difficulty, the carriers being Lao, while the mule men were Hô, a tribe from the Chinese province of Yunnan, who enjoy a monopoly of the mule caravan trade. They are hardy fellows, of good physique and of independent, though pleasant character. They rather amused me by showing considerable contempt for the carriers, with whom they declined to hold any converse whatever.

As regards portage in the north of Siam, all heavy goods, especially those which are not required on the actual journey,



VIEW OF THE TEMPLE AT SADET, TEN MILES NORTH OF LAMPĀNG.

are as a rule packed into elephant howdahs, each elephant carrying up to 600 lbs. in weight, or, if these are wanting, on to Yunnanese mules which can always be hired at reasonable rates. The porters themselves each carry two round baskets, some eighteen inches high, one at either end of a long bamboo pole, which they put over their shoulders; into these baskets are thrown, haphazard, tins of provisions, kitchen utensils, in fact, everything which one will want on the march, but the load is never a heavy one, as the men are not of strong physique, and are moreover more inclined to peace and sleep than to hard work in a hot sun. They have, however, a good standard of honesty, and seldom will anything be lost from the 'hāp,' as the basket is called; moreover, although possessed of no great degree of intelligence, they have a certain sense of humour, and willingly respond to kindness and a cheerful spirit.

Mr. Wood, who was accompanied by his wife and small daughter, was travelling with elephants and mules, and on the morning of our leaving Phrê, having seen the elephants loaded, we set out for Ta Kamôk, our camping place for the first night. We walked ahead for an hour or more, and then, coming to the Hué Kamin,¹ crossed the stream and plunged into the forest. Knowing that generations of Shan and Hô with their caravans had travelled between Lampāng and Phrê on constant trading expeditions, I had expected to traverse a well-beaten track, but was pleasantly surprised to find that none such existed, and that we were to pick our way, now along the bed of the stream itself, clambering over rocks and boulders, now climbing steep rocky ascents, and now walking through forest glades. Overhead the branches of the giant trees met, shading us from the rays of the sun and keeping the air delightfully cool. The rippling stream, the small cascades tumbling over the rocks, and the song of the birds all combined to make us feel the joy of life, and our spirits respond to the brightness of the scene. Many have sung their hymns in praise of the forest life, but it is only those who have actually come under its spell that can realise the peculiar fascination and beauty of a tropical forest.

More than once we met a party of British Shan, fine upright men, driving their bullock caravans, often of more than a hundred head, and each man armed with his gun and sword. The latter is of moderate length, with a curved blade in a sheath, and a wooden hilt almost as long as the blade itself. We exchange salutations, as is the invariable custom in the north on meeting fellow-travellers, and pass on.

¹ A 'Hué' is a forest stream.

On the top of a hill we suddenly came across a large sign-board, marking the boundary between the districts of Lampāng and Phrê, and, on my observing that the division seemed unequal, Mr. Wood told me an amusing legend, current among the peasant folk, of how there was in olden times a dispute between the Chiefs of the two towns as to the limits of their respective territories, and of how they agreed to decide the matter by a trial of personal effort. On a given day each was to saddle his pony, as early as he pleased, and ride out to meet the other; where they should meet, there the boundary was to be fixed. Now the Chief of Lampāng was a thin, wiry, little man, who sat up throughout the night preceding the trial and, as soon as the sky showed a streak of dawn, jumped upon his pony and galloped away for dear life. But the Chief of Phrê was a fat, elderly man, who at the last moment found that he had no pony in his stable sufficiently strong to carry him on such a ride; so his only help in time of need was an equally fat and elderly buffalo. Even then his ill fortune did not desert him for, after keeping awake through half the night, his weary eyelids closed, and when he awoke, it was to find the sun already high in the heavens. Still off he set, as best he might, but had only just managed to struggle to the top of a hill, some twelve miles from Phrê, when to his astonishment he met the Chief of Lampāng—and there the boundary post was fixed.

We were delayed for an hour or more by a pet monkey that escaped, and were accordingly late in arriving at Ta Kamôk. It proved also a long and tiring day for the elephants, as we did not hear the tinkle of their bells until after half-past three, and yet they seemed to have borne the burden and heat of a nine hours' march without being greatly fatigued. It is on their account that one strives to avoid travelling in the afternoon, as they are peculiarly sensitive to the fierce mid-day sun, and the delicacy of their constitution is out of all proportion to their bulk. Fortunately fodder was plentiful and cooling streams were near, so that they were able to satisfy themselves to their hearts' content before being hobbled for the night.

We had agreed to breakfast the next day in the forest on our way, but the fates conspired against us, and the carrier who had gone on ahead with the food failed to stop at the appointed time; consequently, by ten o'clock, after nearly four hours' walking in a vain effort to catch him, we had to call a halt and wait for the main party to come up. Fortunately for us, another carrier soon appeared, bearing a basket with spare provisions, and we had our breakfast after all, of sausages cooked in their

tin and fresh pineapple, washed down by Pilsener beer. Seldom has a meal seemed so satisfying, or beer such a draught of nectar.

Our way again lay through the forest, but the hills were much steeper and there were no streams to charm the eye. We rode for some time after breakfast, and it was a matter of wonder to note how sure-footed the ponies were in climbing the rocky hills, and how they picked their way down the sharpest descents with the utmost care and precision. They are not very small either, like the Siamese 'rats,' but stand on the average at least twelve hands high.

The second stage of the journey proved a light one, as we reached the 'Sālā' at Pāng Bué shortly after noon, and the elephants were not far behind. At Pāng Bué we heard of a tiger scare. It seemed that a short time previously a man-eater had actually been bold enough to enter the compound of the rest-house and had carried off a pony belonging to the Governor of Phrê, who was staying in the 'Sālā'¹; and now came a story of how the same tiger had climbed a tree fifty feet high, dragged down a man who was hiding there for safety, and had eaten him. There appeared to be no doubt that the man had been eaten, but that the tiger had climbed fifty feet to fetch him was difficult for us to accept. Possibly the tiger had made a spring at the tree and the man had fallen into his jaws through sheer fright. We had thought of making preparations for sitting up that night over a kill, but from further enquiries it was clear that the tiger had changed his beat, and so we decided to go quietly to bed. That night we heard the 'bāng,' or flying squirrel, hooting in the forest, and our servants looked at one another in distress, as it is said to be an omen of disaster to the peasant mind.

In the morning, 'Phū Sidô,' the only male elephant of the four, as soon as he was unhobbled, refused to be caught and, when he finally allowed his mahout to scramble up on to his neck, trotted gaily off into the forest. We looked forward to several hours' delay hunting for him, but my companion sent 'Mê Wāk,' his favourite amongst the females, after the wayward fellow, whereupon he came back like a lamb and gave his mahout no more trouble. Such is the influence of the woman, even among the elephant family.

We left Pāng Bué rather late, but the day's journey was fortunately again a short one. The jungle on either side was not so dense as it had been on the previous days, and the trees were more scattered than usual; it seemed, in fact, more akin

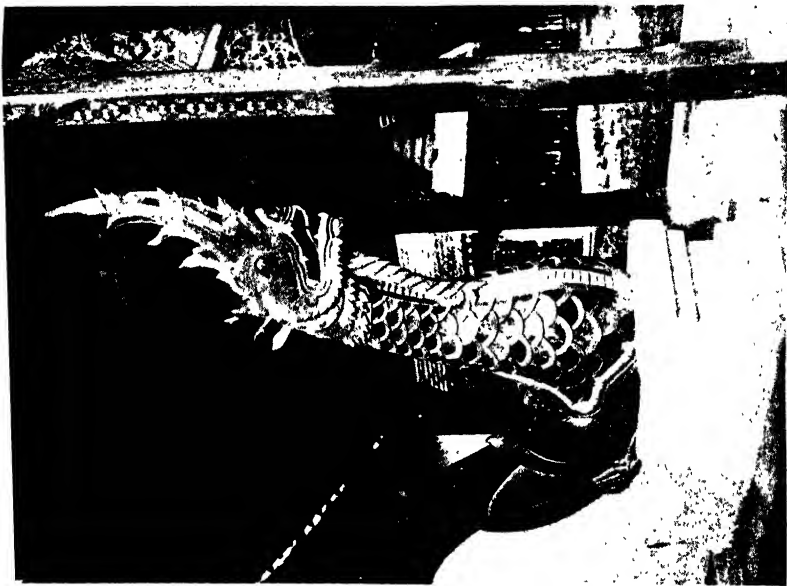
¹ A 'Sālā' is a rest-house.

to a European than to a tropical forest; still the shade was sufficient to keep off the heat of the sun, and a light shower of rain which fell during the morning added to the coolness. Several times we heard the crisp sound of barking deer, or it might have been the barking of wild dogs, which are sometimes to be found in the forests, but of jungle life we saw no sign, except a purely silver-white snake which glided across our path, gazed at us with silent contempt, and with a swish of its tail was gone. We reached the 'Sālā' at Mē Mōh about mid-day, but had a disagreeable surprise during the afternoon, for the roof proved to be badly in need of repair, and a storm which passed over our heads almost flooded us out. Fortunately the rain passed away, and that evening we saw a sight which gave us food for conversation during the remainder of the day.

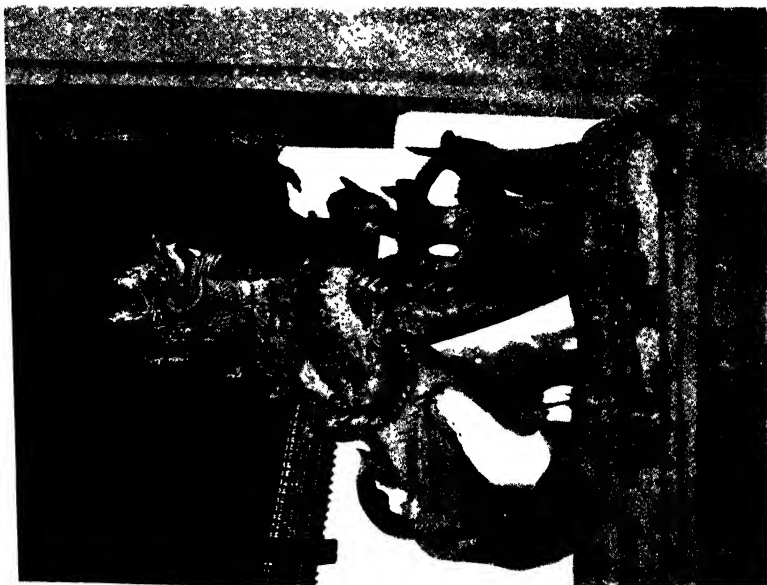
Just outside the rest-house there was a tall tree and, while we were discussing the effects of the storm, we suddenly saw a Lao come and kneel before it, and place offerings at its foot, apparently to some 'spirit' which dwelt in the tree and which he desired to appease. Flowers, candles and fruits were reverently laid; the candles were lit, and the man disappeared. This was evidently a form of the worship of spirits, or 'Phī,' as they are called in Siamese.

The thought of 'Phī' did not, however, keep us awake that night at Mē Mōh, and we rose early next morning, ready for the last stage of the journey to Lampāng. At no great distance from the rest-house, the road broadened out and the jungle became very sparse, giving way to bracken and thinly-wooded forest. Throughout the day there was no shade from the sun, and a feeling of relief shone on the faces of the entire party when we emerged on to the plain below us and saw the walls of the city looming in the distance. High, and of red brick, they made an imposing appearance, yet would obviously be capable of offering but little resistance under modern conditions of attack. As we approached the town, to right and left we could just catch a glimpse of temples, mostly in the Burmese style, nestling outside the walls among the trees. One or two, which appeared to have spires of corrugated iron, gave one the idea of the familiar zinc chapel seen at home, but were saved from the depths of such incongruity by being painted gold, and red and green—not altogether out of harmony with their surroundings. It is said that a great many of the temples standing in the North to-day are the result of the Burmese occupation of the country between 1550 and 1770.

We passed through the wall and down the roads of the city,



TYPE OF MYTHICAL SERPENT-DRAGON (NĀGA)
FOUND IN THE TEMPLES OF NORTHERN SIAM.



TYPE OF MYTHICAL LION (SINGTO) GUARDING
TEMPLE FOUND IN NORTHERN SIAM

which I thought somewhat narrow, with the customary one-storied, open shops on either side, and finally reined up at our destination about noon.

I stayed in Lampāng for two nights, as seven of my carriers wished to return to Phrê and seven others had to be engaged to carry my loads to Chiangmai. These were easily obtained, and on the following morning I said farewell to my hospitable host and his wife, and pursued my solitary way to Chiangmai.

I had brought a cycle with me, as I had been told that it would be of use in Chiangmai itself, and having sent my carriers on ahead, I cycled out of Lampāng at nine in the morning. I found the track quite fit for cycling for more than two hours, although I had to dismount occasionally, once to cross a broad stream, and at another time when the overflow from a padi field had flooded the road; and I eventually arrived at the next village, Hāng Săt, sometime after mid-day. The Governor of Lampāng had kindly given me a letter to the District Officer at Hāng Săt, instructing him to open up the rest-house, which I found was not situated at Hāng Săt itself, but at a small village called Pakōng Nôk, some six miles distant. The District Officer at once sent a mounted clerk to prepare the house, while I set out on foot and, taking tiffin by the wayside, reached the 'Sālā' at three. The road from Lampāng is flat, consisting mainly of a sandy track between acres of padi fields stretching far on either side. The formation of these fields is interesting. The whole area is divided up into a number of small patches of land, from twenty-five to fifty yards square, each square being surrounded by a small bund about a foot high; there may be a hundred owners to the whole area of land, but the bunds make the division sufficiently distinct without any more prominent boundary. While riding along, it was ominous to observe that, although the rains are supposed in a normal year to begin during the third week in May, so little had fallen by the middle of June that most of the fields were still hard and dry, and it would be weeks ahead before any ploughing could take place. The rains are so scanty in the North in most years, and the rice crop consequently so meagre, that in many places the people are sometimes on the verge of starvation, and rice has to be imported from the South. This is the more unsatisfactory, in that the rice generally eaten in the North is 'Khao Nîo,' or glutinous rice, which finds no favour and is not grown in the South. There is no doubt that some system of irrigation would be of great advantage in the North, by making it independent to some extent of the rainfall. The area of land in the North

under rice cultivation is quite extensive, and was a matter of surprise to me, as one is inclined in Bangkok to associate the north of Siam with forests of teak, and teak alone. The rice crop in the North is, however, at its best only sufficient as a rule for local needs.

The 'Sālā' at Pakōng Nōk was a delightful little bungalow, situated on the side of a hill, overlooking a tiny village and a small stream, on the other side of which were tall hills covered with thick jungle.

I awoke early in the following morning, with the sun just rising over the trees, and left the 'Sālā' at six. After walking for an hour or more, we reached the Mē Sān, a clear swift-running stream, where I took my breakfast, sitting on a log by the river's bank. The way was not difficult, but consisted in continually crossing the stream; I tried to count the number of crossings, but after forty I became lost and gave it up. The scenery was delightful, and resembled that through which we passed on the first day after leaving Phrê. Again I met many caravans of cattle, but long before they came in sight, I could hear the tinkle of their bells, and long after they had passed and were receding in the distance, their music lingered in my ears. As soon as I had left the Mē Sān behind, the road became suddenly abrupt, and for more than half an hour led me up a steep and rocky hill, at the summit of which wide stretches of hilly jungle could be seen on either side. I looked back to watch the mules and ponies climbing the hill, and was impressed by the easy and graceful manner in which they picked out their path and arrived safely at the top with little apparent effort. Now the path led down and down, as far as and perhaps farther than I had climbed, and once again I found myself in the forest. It was curious how little animal life we saw: of monkeys there were none, and even snakes were rare, and yet the jungles all around, which are little trodden, must be full of animals of every description, from tigers to squirrels. At noon I stopped for tiffin in a hollow, and then on again until I was finally brought to a stand by a broad stream, on the other side of which I could see the roof of the rest-house at my destination, Mē Thā. I waited some little time for the ponies to arrive, but as they did not appear, I took off my boots and puttees and waded through the stream.

From Mē Thā to Lamphūn, the next stage, the distance proved to be short. For an hour and a half I walked steadily ahead along a well-beaten track, first up a steep hill and then down through forest glades, until I suddenly came upon the Mē Sān again.

Being far ahead of my party I crossed the stream and rested at a Lao homestead on the opposite bank. It was so typical of the country that it will be of interest to describe it. The homestead consisted of four or five bamboo structures,—it seems extravagant to call them houses—all built on piles with the main one in the centre, and the whole surrounded by a bamboo fence. The piles were stout, well-seasoned posts; the walls were of plaited rattan cane and the roof was built of dried leaves supported underneath by beams of bamboo poles. On the verandah of the main structure sat the good man and his wife, apparently with nothing in the world to do but sell their wares to hungry wayfarers; bananas, pumpkins, miang,¹ and other articles of food were set out to ease the traveller's hunger, while he might slake his thirst, at the cost of nothing but his own labour, from several jars, kept constantly filled with water from the stream. The man wore nothing but a loincloth, and the wife had apparently just finished her bath, for she was not wearing the 'sin' and a close-fitting bodice, the usual dress of the Lao, but one single garment, which covered her bosom and reached down to her knees; it seemed to be a 'sin' improvised for the time being. There was a cow in the byre, and a pony in the stall, while under the houses, in a continuous search for grain, a dozen fowls ran to and fro. Almost as numerous as the fowls were the children, for when I arrived I counted no less than eight fat brown bodies splashing in the stream, and laughing joyously as only children can laugh, with never a care or thought in the world. Seven girls and one boy, most of them seemingly of the same immature age, and all clothed in nature's garb. Certainly, except for the tiny babe, there was not a difference of three inches in height between any two, and the tallest could not have measured more than three feet nine. All but the smallest of the girls had already put up their hair, a curious sight to Western eyes, but the custom among the Lao. As soon as there is hair enough, up it goes into a coil, and I am sorry to say that, once it is up, it is very seldom taken down again.

We were a motley crowd, resting in the shade afforded by the two outer huts, a party of Lao husbandmen, two priests and a novice in their long yellow robes and holding their white umbrellas, and myself; and presently we were joined by two women and two girls, with their 'hāp' of rice, who could not resist the temptation to stop and chatter with the goodman's wife,

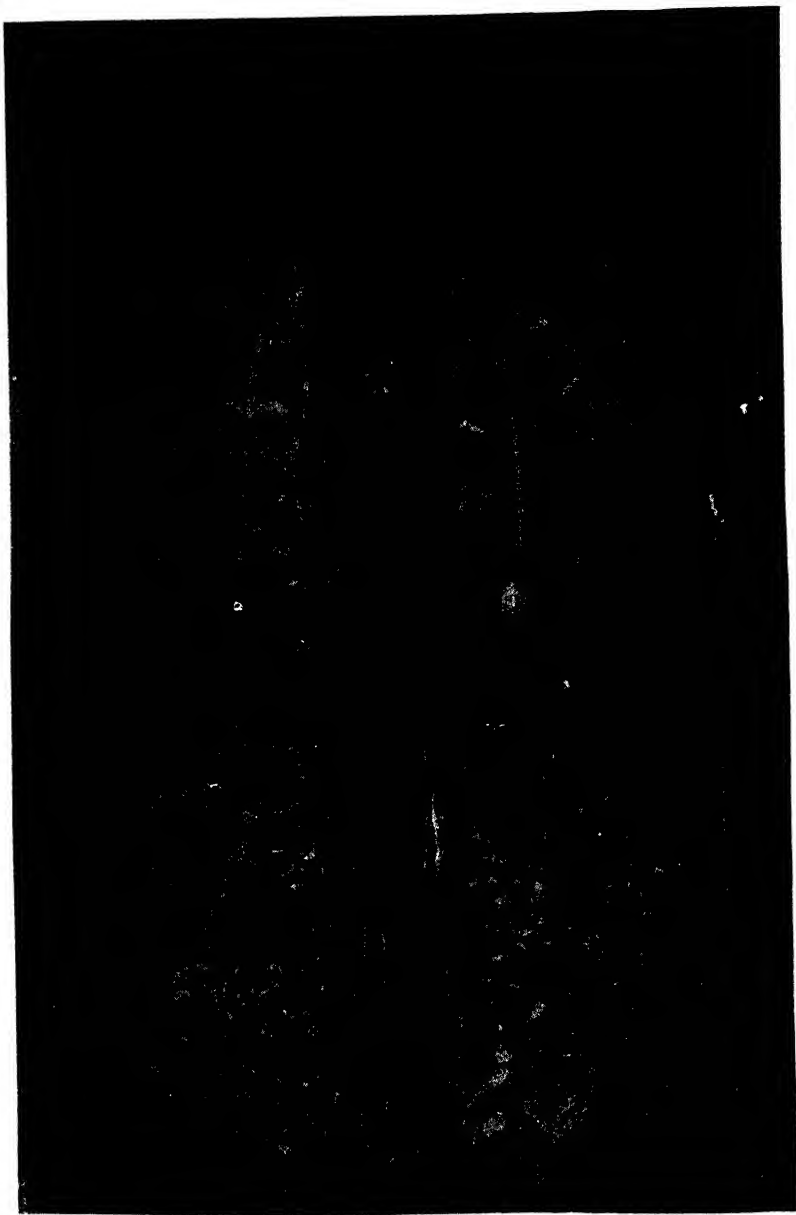
¹ A species of tea-leaf, chewed by the peasants as the sailor chews his quid of tobacco.

and incidentally to try and persuade her to give them fruit for a smile. But the goodman's wife knew her business well; so after much vain reiteration that they had no money, but would gladly have food, the women went on their way with a laugh and a joke. Then the children finished their bathe and, having put on their tiny 'sin,' came swarming up into the enclosure of the homestead; and I marvelled to see a child, who could not be more than four or five years old, hoist the babe on to her hip, in the usual native fashion. It must have been a grievous strain on her little body, but if it was so, she did not show it. They looked at me, the big white stranger, with the shyest of glances, but presently one made up her mind that I was not so very fierce, for she approached quite close to me and said gravely 'Tā Khīo,' which means 'green eyes.' I could not allow myself to be slandered in this way, so I retorted 'Tā deng,' which means 'red eyes,' and she ran away with a toss of her little head. There are no specific words in Siamese for 'blue' and 'brown.' She might have said 'Tā Khīo Fā,' which means 'sky-blue'; and I could have replied 'Tā Dām Deng,' which means 'black-red,' a euphemism sometimes used for 'brown.'

What a life of ease and contentment, must be that of such a family! I should have liked to stay awhile and talk with the goodman and his wife. What is their philosophy of life? How do they propose to rear their brood of eight, most of whom appeared to be twins? But my time was not at my own disposal, and as the rest of my party had by this time arrived, I had to be up and on.

From that point the road was straight and wide and dusty, and after walking for some time I mounted my pony and rode the remainder of the way, keeping a torrid sun off my neck by means of my Chinese cook's umbrella. Lamphūn was reached at eleven, and we soon discovered that a motor car would be leaving in the afternoon for Chiangmai. After my former experience I had certain misgivings as to the pleasures of such a ride, but when the car arrived, it appeared to be of a far superior type to the one running between Den Chai and Phrê, and two hours' jolting over a stony road brought me without mishap to the gate of my destination in Chiangmai.

The journey had occupied eleven days in all, and I had covered some four hundred and fifty miles, of which three hundred and thirty were by rail, and one hundred and twenty by road. In the dry season one could cycle practically the whole of the way from Mē Thā to Chiangmai, a distance of some thirty miles, for the road is very straight and there is only one hill; in fact,



CARVED TEAK DOUBLE-DOOR AT THE ENTRANCE TO A TEMPLE
AT NÂN (*one of four.*)

practically the whole area between the two places is one large rice plain.

I have described this journey from Bangkok to Chiangmai at some length, since, as far as I am aware, it has never been described before; and also because, now that railway communication is through to Chiangmai, these jungle tracks will probably gradually become overgrown and fall into disuse, and it is not likely that any European traveller will ever describe the overland journey again.

The town of Chiangmai, with its suburbs, has been well described by Mr. Holt Hallett in his book, 'A Thousand Miles on an Elephant,' and I do not propose to give a detailed description again.

The present city lies on both banks of the river Mê Ping, but the ancient part of it is all on the west bank, the east bank being mainly given up to the houses of the European firms established in Chiangmai, the Mission compounds, with their school and church, and the beautiful park-like club. The old city, which is dominated by Doi Sùthép, a mountain rising behind it to a height of over 5000 feet, is, as Mr. Holt Hallett says, divided into two parts, the one embracing the other, on the south and east sides. The inner city faces the cardinal points, is walled and moated all round, and contains the palace of the Prince of Chiangmai. The outer city is more than half a mile broad, and is partly walled and partly palisaded on its outer sides. Both cities are entered by gates leading in and out of a fortified courtyard. A portion of the inner wall with the moat, with Doi Sùthép in the distance, is shown in the frontispiece to this work.

The chief buildings outside the ancient city on the western bank are the British Consulate, which lies some distance away to the south, and the Forest Department's house a little below that again. The house in which I lived was situated near the British Consulate, at right angles to the main road, and stood at the end of a wide extent of padi-land, which stretched away to the hills, almost as far as the eye could see. From my bedroom a clear, uninterrupted view of Doi Sùthép was to be had, and every morning, on waking, I could 'look unto the hills.'

Doi Sùthép is now used by the European community as a hill-station during the extremely hot weather of March and April, before the break of the rains, and many bungalows are dotted all over it, at heights ranging from 1200 feet right up to the top. At a height of 3000 feet there is the famous Temple of The Emerald Rice-Bowl, which is visited during the year by

large numbers of pilgrims from far and near. I met there once myself a party of Shans, who had come all the way from Chieng Tung, at least 12 to 14 days' march distant, just on a pilgrimage, to pay their respects and then return the way they had come. It is possible, and even probable, that this is the temple referred to in a later chapter, as that on which the elephant rested, when he was carrying the relics of the Lord Buddha presented by Phra Sūmānā to the King of Chiengmai, as there are no known remains of a temple on the actual summit of the mountain.

Between the city and the foot of Doi Sūthép are the remains of a large fort, said to have been erected by the Burmese at their siege of the city about 1774, and to the south of this are also the ruins of a very ancient town, which tradition says was once Mūang Lameng, the capital of the Lāwā before the Tai came. Now nothing is left visible to the eye, except fosses and portions of the ramparts; but there is no telling what systematic digging and disciplined archaeological research might not bring forth in the neighbourhood of Chiengmai. One day, no doubt, now that an Archaeological Department has been established, work on a more or less extensive scale will be undertaken there.

In the meantime let us leave the past to itself, and let me give you a picture of life in Chiengmai, abnormal it is true, but one which has left a lasting impression upon me, and will give you some idea of the difficulties and dangers to which the people of these climes are exposed.

As I have said, behind my house there was a vast stretch of padi-land, and in the year of which I speak, the rains had been very scanty; in fact, September had come before the fields had been ploughed, and the seedlings fully planted. Then came mid-September and with it disaster, for many of the fields had scarce been a fortnight planted when the river Mē Ping rose to abnormal heights, overflowed its banks, and for four days the peasants saw their growing crops buried beneath a lake. When the waters finally subsided, most of those fields were ruined.

During the night of September 21st the river Mē Ping began to rise, and at seven the next morning had risen from its accustomed three feet to a height of nine feet two, and was already overflowing its right bank. In the course of the day the river gradually rose to nine feet four, and by the afternoon both banks had been unable to prevent the swirling waters from forcing a path inland. In the evening I crossed the new bridge which spans the river and, wading through the dip opposite the Mission Girls' School where the water reached to my knees, went up as far as the old bridge. There I met a friend, and together we

went on to the bridge. The waters did not quite reach the wooden planking, but the projection of many of the buttresses and the irregular surface of the bridge itself, which showed that many of the supports had given way beneath, were sufficient to tell us that it could not long withstand any severe shock. Fortunately there were not many teak logs above Chiengmai, and there was no danger from that direction, but, as we watched, we saw several logs come gliding down; some passed safely under the bridge, some became jammed between the supports, while one huge log of wood seemed to stick in an unaccountable manner just at the head of a projecting beam, and to swing gently from one side to the other, without being able to make up its mind which way to go.

The flood had attracted many of the townsfolk, and it was interesting to watch them as they went by—first a conservative old Chinaman, still jealously guarding his pig-tail, at least what there was of it; then a respectable Parsee dealer in gems, gravely discussing the affair with several of his fellows; next a Lao-Chinese boy of ten or twelve, with his head closely shaven except on the top, from which the hair hung down on all sides in tufts, like a coconut at a fair; then two Lao imps, who eyed us speculatively, but decided that it would be better to pass by. Close on their heels came a party of women, half Chinese and half Lao, in the midst of them the daughter of the richest Chinese storekeeper in Chiengmai, but lately married and displaying her new dignity. The 'sin,' or skirts, were of shot silk, and had no doubt cost much money. Suddenly bearing down towards us with martial stride came a tall Sikh, clad in a suit of pale blue pyjamas, full bearded, and his black hair streaming down to his waist. We knew him well as the principal cloth-dealer in Chiengmai, but he reminded me at the moment of a giant picture of some Eastern Prophet. Lao, Chinamen, Indians of many castes and races, and women of all descriptions, passed in a seemingly endless stream before us, some with the day's work manfully done, some perhaps with it never begun.

As soon as the shadows began to deepen, and the sun sank behind Doi Sūthép, I retraced my steps homewards. When I reached my house I was relieved to find that, although the British Consulate and all the compounds along the river bank were already flooded, so far mine had escaped. Yet my hopes of escape were vain, for, on rising next morning, my first look earthwards encountered—a lake. The day before, the vast area of padi-land behind my house had been a sea of brilliant green, and so recent was it that the ploughing had been done,

that I could still hear their cries of 'kwā, kwā,' as the ploughmen urged their buffaloes on. That morning there was nothing to be seen but a great stretch of water, with here and there a bush or tree protruding. Far away in the distance I could see men sending their frail, flat-bottomed canoes shooting across the water, and the fenced-in highlands, which once were nurseries for the rice-seedlings, looked like fishing stakes. My own compound was several inches under water, and to get to the main road I had to roll up my trousers above my knees and wade a hundred yards of the side road, with my boots and socks in my hand. But what a game it was to the children! Up and down my road the boats flew, full of boys and girls, and often their parents with them. Boats were not actually needed, for the water was nowhere more than two feet deep, and the native is always bare to the knee; but here was an excuse for play, and so the fun began. Upsetting the boats, splashing and laughing, the merry throng passed the morning, all unmindful of the danger which might befall their rice crop, if the waters did not subside. I forced my way through the water to the bank of the river, and watched it roaring by; and found it a truly noble sight to see a broad river in full flood. At its lowest ebb the river Mē Ping is unattractive, but at nine feet six, to which it had risen, it showed up its breadth of almost a quarter of a mile; and to see the teak logs go whirling along, but with a steady rhythm, gave one an adequate idea of the force of the current.

At the foot of the Consulate steps, where I stood, was a narrow brick pathway, slightly arched, so that between the centre of the path, which was dry land, and the first step, there was a considerable flow of water. There I watched a small chameleon lizard stroking its beard reflectively and wondering how it might gain that first step without a wetting. Suddenly it made up its mind, and with a mighty leap spanned the water and landed safe. Bravo, chameleon—a splendid jump!



IMAGES OF THE BUDDHA INSIDE THE TEMPLE WITH FOUR
DOORS AT NĀN (*one facing each door.*)

CHAPTER V

Climate—Population—Education—Crime— Trade, and other Sundry Matters

It has been said of Gladstone, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he could envelop prosaic facts and figures in such a mist of romance as to carry his listeners along with the sheer fascination of his story.

Now whether I can emulate Gladstone in this respect is very doubtful, but to give you a true picture of the North of Siam I must devote this chapter in the main to plain facts and figures, and so you must bear with me as far as you can.

I have already said that the whole territory of Northern Siam is now contained in one Circle (as it is called in English), namely Bāyāp. Formerly, there were two Circles, Bāyāp and Mahārāt.

The area of Bāyāp is given officially as 22,954 square miles, and that of Mahārāt as 13,294 square miles, the two together making in all the large area of 36,248 square miles, that is, covering a country somewhat larger than Ireland, as I mentioned in Chapter I.

The climate of the North of Siam is one of greater extremes than the South or the Centre, and the rainfall is less. In Bāyāp the average rainfall for the last five years has been 41.3 inches annually, and in Mahārāt 37.7 inches. There is only one Circle in which the rainfall is less than in Mahārāt, and that is Nakōn Sāwān, with an average of 37.2 inches. These figures compare rather unfavourably with Bangkok, where the average has been 53 inches for the last ten years, ranging from 67 inches in 1917 to as low as 34 inches in 1920; and much more so with the Southern Provinces, where the average rainfall is about 100 inches a year. But the difference is a natural one, seeing that Bangkok and the Southern Provinces are open to the sea and the prevailing monsoon, whereas the North is far inland and receives only the tail-end of the south-west monsoon.

In the winter months, from November as soon as the rains have ceased until the middle or end of February, the temperature of the North of Siam is delightful, ranging from 80° F. at mid-day to sometimes under 40° F. at night in a particularly cold

season. It can occasionally be too cold to be pleasant, especially if one is travelling in the jungle, at the end of the year. I can remember one such New Year's eve, when, putting up at a rest-house between Nān and Mûang Pông, it was so cold that, although I went to bed enveloped in as many sweaters, overcoats and blankets as I could lay my hands on, I found it impossible to sleep, and eventually the wind proved so piercing that the whole camp rose and packed up at two in the morning, and we set out on our journey again with torches for our guide. It is of course the great range, at times of 45° F., between mid-day and midnight that makes the body so susceptible to the cold.

From the beginning of March until the break of the rains in May is a very trying period. The country is as dry as the proverbial bone, and the jungles present a sorry sight of carpets of charred leaves and stumpy trunks of trees, where forest fires have broken out. In April in Lampāng one can see the fires—twinkling points of flame—all over the hills which encircle the city. Chieng Rai, which stands at the head of a wide, open plain with high hills behind on the Chieng Tung side, records, I believe, the highest temperature, going as high as 110° F. in April (as well as the lowest in the cold season); but Chiengmai, Phrê and especially Lampāng, are very hot for about three months of the year, when the nights are almost airless and the early mornings, too.

The rains, which last theoretically from May to November, are the same all over the tropics—receiving the warmest of welcomes when they arrive, but outstaying that welcome so long that, when they eventually do go, it is to a chorus of hearty cursing and relief at their departure.

June is a pleasant month, when everything in Nature is coming to life once more, and the air is full of a warm, soft breeze; but September is a difficult month, when the earth is sodden, and the air is dull and heavy with storms. Only the emerald-green fields of growing padi give promise of a better time to come. September is the most trying month of the year.

The North of Siam compares very favourably with Bangkok as regards the number of mosquitoes to be faced, but, alas! the presence of one mosquito in Chiengmai often means malaria, while in Bangkok one may be bitten 'to death' without any ill effects. The reason is that malaria is very prevalent among the Northern folk, while in Bangkok it was for many years almost unknown, though it is now said to be creeping in. I myself lived in Bangkok for over five years before I went North, and have now lived there for a number of years since my return

without experiencing an attack of malaria, but I had not been four months in Chiangmai before I was laid up with a sharp bout. It may safely be said that practically every European living in the North has had malaria at some time or other.

Now for more figures and statistics.

The population of Bāyāp, according to the latest census (of 1919-20) was given as 800,000 in round figures, and that of Mahārāt as 550,000; and thus the two Circles have an aggregate population of about 1,350,000, giving a density of only 37 to the square mile; though here it must be remembered that large tracts of country are either evergreen jungle or highly mountainous, and it is not possible to make any fair comparison with our thickly populated Western lands.

The following table¹ will show how the population is distributed, among the various Provinces, and also the number of males to females:

	<i>Province.</i>	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Bāyāp	Chiangmai	173,700	175,900	349,600
	Chiang Rai	133,100	133,100	266,200
	Mê Hong Sôn (Salwīn)	24,700	25,000	49,700
	Lamphūn	66,100	66,600	132,700
Mahārāt	Phrê	52,300	51,400	103,700
	Lampāng	137,800	137,800	275,600
	Nān	82,500	82,000	164,500
Total		670,200	671,800	1,342,000

From these figures there is one fact that stands out in salient fashion, and that is the almost identical number of females and males. This points to a conclusion, which may indeed be correctly drawn, and that is, the people of the North are, by force of economic circumstances, if not by religious profession, monogamists. In point of fact, if one lives long among the Lao (or, indeed, among the peasants of Lower Siam), one is struck by the number of old, happy, married couples who 'have lived together now for forty years.' The sight of them would have warmed Chevallier's heart!

Polygamy in this country is indeed a luxury of the rich, and signs are not wanting to-day that, among the educated Siamese themselves, the habit is going 'out of fashion,' with the gradual

¹ Taken from the Statistical Year Book for 1924.

emancipation of Siamese women of the upper class. Those of the lower class always have been emancipated. In Europe we are apt to dwell rather heavily on the religious side of this question, and lose, perhaps, our sense of proportion. At all events, the two chief factors at work here are (1) education, among the upper strata of Society, and (2) distribution of sexes, among the lower.

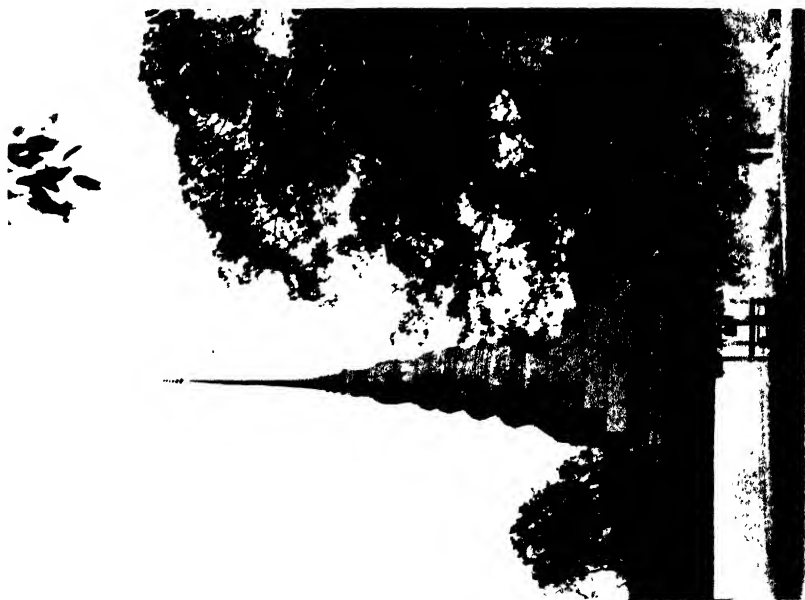
The great majority of the people now inhabiting the north of Siam are undoubtedly of Tai extraction, and are descendants of the last invaders of the country, that is, invaders in a migratory sense, for Burma never attempted to populate its Lao dominions.

Of this branch of the human race there are at least five subdivisions to be found either in Bāyāp or in Mahārāt, namely, the Siamese themselves, the Lao, the Ngto (or Shan) most of whom are British subjects, the Lū, and the Khōn, mostly settlers in the Chieng Rai district, from the Chieng Tung State. Of these the Lao, the Lū, and the Khōn are the cultivators of the soil; the Siamese form the official class; while the Shan are mostly petty traders and foresters.

But there is still a certain number of the ancient Môn-Khmer stock hidden away in the hills and jungles of the North, represented by the Kaché tribe, with its branches of Khāmū, and Khamīt, as well as by the original Lāwā, already referred to in the historical chapters; and there are also many other tribes scattered throughout the two Circles of Tibeto-Burman stock, such as the Meao, the Yao and the Mūhsō. In addition to these, there is also a numerous tribe called Karien (or Karen), whose origin has not yet been definitely settled, but who occupy the hill-ranges between Siam and Burma. Most of them, according to Graham, are to be found on the Burma side of the frontier, but there are also considerable numbers living on the eastern slopes of the dividing range of mountains through all the western border districts of Siam, even extending down to the Malay Peninsula. It is regarded as most probable that they came originally from south-west China, and are in some way related to the Lao-Tai family.

The Yao and the Meao are found in the northern and north-eastern parts of Siam, and are well-known as cultivators of the opium poppy. One can, indeed, sometimes see from the plains patches of the plant standing out high up among the hills.

The Kaché family are great foresters, and are much in request among the timber companies both for work in their teak forests and as elephant drivers. In the past thirty years large numbers have come over from the French (eastern) side to find work,



PAGODA AT TEMPLE OF CHA-HENG, NEAR NÂN.



AN ANCIENT RUINED PAGODA ON THE SUMMIT OF
A HILL IN THE MÉ CHÜN FOREST.

but the practice is not regarded with much favour by the French authorities, who see in this migration a potential loss of population.

Lastly, there is still a remnant of aboriginal folk living in the jungles known as 'Phi Tong¹ Lüang,' or the 'Yellow Leaf Spirits.' They derive their name from two sources. First, they are seldom seen (and have indeed often been regarded as the product of 'travellers' tales'), and hence are regarded as 'spirits'; and, secondly, they are said to live in shelters formed solely of banana leaves, which are deserted for fresh ones as soon as the leaves turn yellow. I can myself confirm this in a sense, for I have seen yellow shelters of this nature in the jungles round Nān (which is supposed to be the region of their habitat) evidently formed by man.

They wear no clothes, but are accustomed to the use of iron, as they are known to carry long spears. Recently a member of a European timber firm has come into touch with some of these people, and has gathered a good deal of information about them, which has now been published in the *Journal of the Siam Society*.

This is a brief account of the present inhabitants of Northern Siam, which must suffice for the present. I will refer to some of these peoples again later on, but must now return to the most important of them, the Lao, who are our chief consideration.

The Lao people are, and have been for centuries, Buddhists by profession, and the land is covered with the temples which their forefathers erected, either of their own free will or at the bidding of their Burmese masters, in honour of 'The Teacher' and his Way of Life. In the two combined Circles there are now stated officially to be 2884 temples, of which 1791 are in Bāyāp and 1093 are in Mahārāt. This gives an average of one temple for every 468 persons, and it would be interesting to know how these figures compare with similar figures in Europe or America. They refer, presumably, only to temples which are still in use, and not to the countless ruined shrines and pagodas which are a feature of the land, wherever one may travel, or to those many others which lie buried in oblivion in the old deserted cities like Chieng Sên. Holt Hallett says that the city of Chiangmai alone possessed in his time no less than 80 temples. If we compare these conditions with other parts of Siam, we find that the Circle of Udôn in the East, with an area of 27,200 square miles, and a population of 827,000,

¹ 'Tong' is the banana leaf used for making roofs.

has 1936 temples; Roi Et, also in the East, with an area of 5950 square miles and a population of 700,000, has 1580 temples; Ayudhya, the old capital, with an area of 5970 square miles and a population of 705,000, has 1349 temples; while Bangkok, with the small area of 1200 square miles but 667,000 inhabitants, has 621 temples within its borders.

A curious feature of temple life, however, is the small number of monks in the northern Circles as compared with the brotherhood elsewhere.

Bāyāp has only 4950, and Mahārāt 3100 for all their 2884 temples; while Udōn has 8350, Roi Et 9230, Ayudhya 15,830, and Bangkok 11,670. The Circle of Rajaburi makes the most striking comparison, seeing that it possesses only half the number of temples as Mahārāt, but has three times the number of monks. It is hard to think of the folk of Rajaburi as being more devout and righteous, or more given to religion, than their cousins of the North. In fact, the thought will make those who know Siam smile, for the Circle of Rajaburi has a most unenviable reputation from the point of view of crime, as will be seen later. One reason for the discrepancy between the two divisions of Siam is that in the north many of the country temples, although maintained and kept in repair, do not possess any residential monks, but only receive visits from the monks of neighbouring and more populous centres at certain stated intervals. But another, and the most important reason is that, among the Lao, ordination as a full monk is rare, and is only undertaken as a rule by those who intend to devote their lives, or many years, to religion. Usually a young man is ordained as a novice only, and remains at the temple for a few years (or even months). In Southern Siam there are many monks and few novices; in the North, vice versa.

As regards the number of temples in the various Circles, it is usually accepted that the majority of those now standing in the North were built during the times of the Môn and Burmese domination, which lasted from 1558 to 1774; and it is probable that this influence in the North, and the Cambodian influence in the East of Siam, where it was naturally strongest, have been responsible for their striking preponderance over the other divisions of Siam in this respect. Ayudhya, the former, and Bangkok, the present capital of Siam, are, of course, well supplied, but none of the other Central, nor the Southern Circles, compare favourably with those mentioned per head of population. For the purpose of comparison, I have divided the whole country into four natural divisions, North, East, South, and Central, and now

give the average number of inhabitants to every temple in the different Circles, as I think such figures form interesting material for study:

The North. In Bāyāp there is one temple to every 446, and in Mahārāt one to every 497 inhabitants.

The East. In Udôn the average is one to 427; in Roi Et one to 442; in Ubon one to 628; and in Kōrāt one to 653.

The South. In Rajaburi the average is one to 863; in Surāt one to 707; in Nakôn Sritāmmarāt one to 844; in Puket one to 1955; and in Pattani one to 3190; but these last two contain mostly Malay Mohammedans.

The Centre. In Bangkok the average is one to 1974; in Ayudhya one to 508; in Prachin one to 605; in Chantaburi one to 578; in Nakôn Sāwān one to 650; in Nakôn Chaisi one to 862; and in Pitsanulōk one to 572.

The Siamese have a saying that in olden times 'a rich man would build a temple as a playground for his children,' meaning thereby that it was a comparatively simple task, lightly undertaken without much thought of the cost; but nowadays the building of a temple is a serious and very costly affair, and as time goes on it is probable that fewer temples will be erected by individual people, and their construction and upkeep will become more and more a responsibility of the State, or at least a collective act.

Compulsory primary education was introduced into Siam by the Education Act of October 1st, 1921, though it has not yet been put into force throughout the entire Kingdom. The Act decrees that every child, boy and girl, must attend classes given in the Siamese language for three years, between the ages of 7 and 14, the commencing age varying with each District; and, in addition, if the child does not intend to proceed to the higher secondary course, it must undergo a further two years' course of vocational training. This vocational course depends as to form largely upon the special activities of the District in which the school is situated, but it will in practically all cases be connected with some form of agriculture. Boys, on finishing their five years' course, may take up a higher technical course, but this is optional, and the great majority of boys leave school at the end of five years' training. Girls may take the higher technical course after three years at the primary school, thus receiving a well-merited recognition of their superior intelligence as compared with boys. It is, indeed, not too much to say that, in the ordinary everyday practical affairs of life among the peasants, the average man is no match for the woman.

It is not by any means everybody in Siam who believes that the country is ripe yet for this measure, but, however that may be, it is gradually being extended throughout the various districts of the North, and must in the future have a deep influence upon that part of Siam, more especially as the Lao have hitherto not been compelled to learn to read and write Siamese. Their own language is, in speech, a kind of provincial Siamese, but the written character is different, being derived, according to Prof. Finot, from an ancient Môn script. So, instead of picking up in a haphazard way a smattering of their own script, the young folk will henceforward have to acquire, and rightly so, a new written language entirely; and there is little doubt that in the course of not many decades the Lao script will fall into disuse and oblivion. The Bangkok authorities cannot be blamed for this, for the country is now one by common consent; all decrees, laws and notifications are issued in Siamese, and the spoken languages of both South and North are so much akin, that there is practically no advantage in retaining the Lao form of writing. It is not indigenous, and is only a stumbling-block to the complete fusion of the two branches of the Tai.

The various schools of the country are divided into three classes, namely (1) Government, (2) Local, and (3) Private.

Government schools are those wholly maintained and controlled by the Ministry of Education. The principal Government School is situated in the centre of administration of each Circle, that is, at Chiangmai and Phrê as regards the north of Siam; and an attempt is made to establish a subordinate school in every District of the Circle. These schools are to be looked upon as model schools, to be imitated as far as possible by local schools. The cost of their erection is usually covered by local voluntary subscriptions, but where necessary the Government is willing to assist by grants-in-aid.

Local schools are those supported by either a light education tax levied under the Act, or else by local voluntary contributions. Almost all such schools are situated in the temples, and this connection arises through the intimate relations existing between religion and education in Siam. Long before organised schools came into being, the monks of a temple gave instruction to their own particular novices, whether these latter actually lived in the temple or attended daily; and so the custom has now become fixed. The schools are generally held in the Sālā, or open, raised rest-house attached to the temple, the scholars sitting in rows on the floor. Local schools only provide for the compulsory primary course, secondary education being given in the



LAO FISHING IN THE SWAMPS WITH BASKET.



LAO GIRLS FISHING WITH NETS IN THE RIVER AT PHRÊ.

Government schools, and the local officials of the district are responsible for the proper management of these schools.

Private schools are those either run as a private enterprise and dependent on the fees paid by the scholars, or maintained and controlled by a body of people or a community, such as the missionary schools. All private schools must be registered under the Registration of Schools Act, 1919; and may be visited and inspected by officials of the Ministry of Education. Of such schools there are a number in the North, in fact, wherever the American Mission has established a Station.

Of Government schools there were in B.E. 2464 (1921) 35 in Bāyāp with 98 teachers and 2467 scholars; and 22 in Mahārāt, with 76 teachers and 2321 scholars. These figures show an increase of over 100 per cent. in all three cases over those of 1917.

Of Local schools there were in 1921 in Bāyāp 134 with 172 teachers and 7523 scholars; and in Mahārāt, 99 with 114 teachers and 5468 scholars. Of the schools in Bāyāp, 127 were situated in temples, and of those in Mahārāt, 93.

These figures show that some headway is being made with the progress of education generally among the Northern folk, but Bāyāp and Mahārāt have not yet been long enough an integral part of Siam for any comparison to be made with the Bangkok Circle and those surrounding it. Still the Lao is such a cheerful and intelligent fellow, that I have no doubt it will not be long before he realises the full benefits of the three R's, and responds manfully to the call.

The Mission schools are well attended, and are proving a great power for good in the land.

In considering the question of education and the general development of the North of Siam, nothing is so remarkable or augurs so well for the future as the absence of serious crime, when compared with some of the central and southern Provinces of Siam.

In the year 2466 (1923-24) the number of criminal cases reported as arising in the whole Kingdom was 42,800 in a population of 9,200,000, or an average of one in every 215 persons. In Bangkok Circle, the Capital, the average was naturally highest and works out at one in 60, with 11,069 cases in a population of 667,000. Ayudhya had 4300 cases, or one in 164; Pitsanulōk, a notorious Circle, 3280 cases, or one in 121; Rajaburi, already mentioned, 3300 cases, or one in 143; while in Bāyāp, with 2235 cases, the average fell to one in 357; and in Mahārāt, with only 1137 cases, it was as low as one in 480.

Even more remarkable are the figures which show the *convictions* obtained for serious crime in the six Circles mentioned, and the following table is a striking testimony to the peaceful and law-abiding nature of the northern population:

CONVICTIONS FOR SERIOUS CRIME IN 1923-24.

Crime	Bangkok (667,000)	Ayudhya (705,000)	Rajaburi (471,000)	Pitsanulök (396,000)	Bäyāp (798,000)	Mahārāt (544,000)
Murder	51	69	61	53	36	11
Manslaughter	27	43	31	8	0	4
Bodily harm	877	1117	481	201	109	87
Gang robbery	60	110	92	51	19	6
Rape	28	32	66	15	6	4
Total	1043	1371	731	328	170	112

The Circle of Ubol Rajadhani had even less than Mahārāt, with a total, for the five crimes, of 78. Udōn's total was as low as 41, while Roi Et had least of all with 38.

It must not be thought that the above figures represent by any means the total amount of serious crime which takes place in these Circles, but it may be assumed that the proportion of undetected crime is about the same in all Circles, and therefore the figures may serve as a fairly accurate comparison. Indeed, considering the vast extent of the country districts and the small numbers of the Gendarmerie force, it speaks very highly for the latter's efficiency that so many criminals should have been brought to book.

In order to give a further comparison between the two northern Circles and the other four mentioned in the matter of serious crime, I have added one more table, which gives the total number of severe sentences pronounced on convicts during the past five years (1919-1923):

TOTAL SENTENCES FOR FIVE YEARS.

	Bangkok	Ayudhya	Rajaburi	Pitsanulök	Bäyāp	Mahārāt
Executions	23	6	24	12	2	5
Life sentences	45	42	81	22	15	9
10 years and upwards	183	194	320	103	50	39
Total	251	242	425	137	67	53

Udôn had a total of 53; Ubon of 51; and Roi Et of 51. The total for the whole Kingdom was, during the five years, 156 executions, 451 life sentences, and 1996 sentences of 10 years and upwards.

It is generally accepted that Siam was visited by the wave of crime which followed in the wake of the war, and this probably does account for a good proportion of the cases reported in the Southern and Central portions of the country, but it seems that this wave did not reach as far as the North (or, at most, only its back-eddies), for the figures show nothing but a normal amount of crime among a people who are still no less subject to the frailties of the human race than any other agricultural population.

My own experience of crime in the North of Siam is somewhat peculiar, as I was involved in the trial of a number of strange murder cases, all of which have left a strong impression on me of one kind or another; and if I had not realised that each of these cases was an isolated one, and that the population in general was peace-loving, I might have come to and retained an entirely different conclusion from that which must be drawn from the figures I have quoted.

Some of these cases are interesting from a psychological, others from a legal point of view, and I will give the main features of three, which occurred during my stay in the North, all of which presented unusual features, and all of which are, I think, worth recording.

In the first case, which happened in Lampāng, and the motive for which still remains a mystery, three young men were involved, Ai Mông, Ai Kham and Noi Inta. They were all about nineteen or twenty years old, and one of them, Ai Mông, had just been married. The three were good friends, and one night, soon after the marriage had taken place, Ai Kham and Noi Inta went to pay a visit to the bride and bridegroom to see how they were faring. It was a particularly wild night in August; the sky was continually rent with great flashes of lightning, the whole town re-echoed with the mighty crashes of thunder, and the rain came down as if the heavens had opened—in fact, a particularly bad storm,

After the two young men had been sitting with the married couple for some little time, one of them, Ai Kham, excusing himself, rose and left the house, although the storm was still raging furiously, but without saying anything to Noi Inta. Noi Inta looked a little worried at this, and when Ai Kham had been gone a few minutes, he also rose and left. As soon as he was out of the house, he literally dashed after Ai Kham, caught

him up, and, drawing the small knife-dagger which all men carry, stabbed him hard in the throat. Ai Kham fell dead on the spot, but Noi Inta, without waiting to see what the fate of his comrade had been, ran back as hard as he could to the house of Ai Mông, up the steps and into the room he had but just left. Ai Mông, who was still sitting there with his wife, rose in alarm as he saw this wild haggard figure, dripping with rain and carrying a blood-stained dagger, entering the room; but before he could speak or do anything to protect himself, Noi Inta rushed up to him and without a word plunged the dagger into his throat, too. Noi Inta then fled, leaving a terrified and weeping girl to watch by her dead husband through the stormy night, and in the morning to summon her neighbours and inform the authorities of the awful crime which had been committed.

Noi Inta, who had hidden in the hills surrounding Lampāng, was quickly starved into submission, and brought into Lampāng in chains by the Gendarmerie patrol which captured him.

A slightly humorous element was introduced into the tragedy by the prisoner himself, for as soon as he arrived at the prison in Lampāng, he at once demanded a beef-steak and beer; and, when asked what reason he had for such a demand, replied that he presumed he was going to have his head cut off at once, and beef-steak and beer were his chief earthly desires before that event happened.

Noi Inta was presently brought to trial and convicted of the double murder; and eventually, by reason of his youth and other circumstances, had the death sentence commuted to one of imprisonment for life (that is, probably twenty years). But the question which worried the Court, and the townsfolk generally, who were never tired of discussing it, was—what was the motive behind the crime? As far as was known, none of the boys were drunk or influenced by liquor, and Noi Inta himself would or could shed no light on the happenings of the night. It was stated by some that Noi Inta and Ai Kham had quarrelled in the afternoon of the same day, but it obviously had not been a serious quarrel, if it occurred at all, and in any case Ai Mông was not involved in it. There was apparently no earthly reason for Noi Inta committing such a terrible crime, except as the result of a sudden fit of mad passion; and here, I am inclined to believe, is the necessary clue. It was the violent raging storm which made Noi Inta a murderer. I saw him often in Court, and found him a fine, upstanding lad, with a frank open countenance, and as little like a criminal as one could imagine. As far



CARRIERS CROSSING A RIVER.



A TYPICAL HOMESTEAD IN THE NORTH OF SIAM.

as I can judge, it must have been natural forces that acted suddenly upon his mind and turned him temporarily into a madman.

It is very seldom that the Court has before it, in a murder case, irrefutable proof of the value of the evidence given by witnesses, or by the prisoner himself. But I remember one such case at Nān, in which a Burman was accused of murdering a Lao. There was no doubt that the Lao had been killed, and by the accused, since the latter admitted it. But, whereas the prosecution alleged that the Burman had stolen into the back of the large shed where the deed was done, and, creeping up behind the Lao, had struck him a violent blow on the back of the head with a piece of wood, the prisoner himself maintained that he was facing the Lao, who had drawn a knife upon him in a quarrel between them, and that he had struck him in self-defence. He had in fact no intention to kill, but, acting on the spur of the moment, had picked up a piece of wood and aimed it at the Lao's head, with fatal consequences.

Now it happened that the Judge who was sitting on the case had an artificial skull, in use as a tobacco jar. This was brought into Court and set up on a stand to represent the head of the dead man; and each of the prosecuting witnesses, who claimed to have been present at the commission of the crime, was given a round ruler and told to strike the skull in the same way as the prisoner had done. Each of them crept up from behind, in the manner alleged by the prosecution, holding the ruler in his right hand, and struck the skull a downward blow *high* up on the *right-hand* side—in fact, a perfectly normal blow, if the prisoner, who was right-handed, had acted as it was alleged. But, all this time the Court had before it the report of the doctor who had carried out the post-mortem examination, and in this report it was clearly stated that the victim had died from a severe blow on the *left-hand* side of the skull, *low* down—such a blow as could only have been inflicted by a right-handed man, if the parties had been facing one another, and the deceased had turned his head away in anticipation of a blow.

The prisoner was acquitted on the charge of murder, but sentenced to three years' imprisonment as the provocation was not considered sufficient. There must be very few cases of murder, where the chief friend-in-need of the accused is the post-mortem report.

The third case, although also a murder charge was involved, always brings a smile to my lips, for, except to the victim and the principal witness for the prosecution, the humorous side was certainly uppermost throughout.

A Pathan Mahommedan had been killed at Phrê, shot in a field near the city, and three other Pathans were arrested and charged with the murder. The case appeared to be a perfectly straightforward one, as the prosecution had put down on their list two actual eye-witnesses of the crime, the one a Hindu and the other a Lao boy of sixteen, both of them goat-herds.

Nānū, the Hindu, and the first witness called, gave his evidence in a direct and simple manner, and told how he had seen the prisoners with the deceased come into the field, where he was tending his goats, and how, after a quarrel had arisen between the Pathans, three of them had suddenly raised their guns and shot the fourth. He was sufficiently close to see what was going on, and there was no doubt in his mind as to the identity of the three men now accused. They were the men who had murdered Achmat Khan. Nānū, after a very short cross-examination, which elicited nothing more than was known, then stood down, and his place in the witness-box was taken by the Lao boy of sixteen, a good-looking, bright-eyed lad, who spoke and answered all the questions asked him with a direct simplicity which impressed me forcibly.

He said that he had seen the shooting affair take place, but at such a distance that he unfortunately could not distinguish any of the parties concerned. The fact was that, although in the field, he was at the time sitting at the top of a tree, near its boundary, playing on a pipe. So far he had corroborated the first witness, and the examining counsel sat down. The defending counsel then arose, and, after a few desultory questions, the cross-examination ran somewhat in the following fashion:

Counsel: "Do you know the Hindu, Nānū, who has just given evidence?"

Boy: "Yes, very well; we both keep goats in the same field, and have done so for a good long time."

Counsel: "On the day and at the time the shooting took place, do you know where Nānū was?"

Boy: "As a matter of fact, he did not come to the field that day. He told me he would not be coming, as he had some business to do in the town."

Counsel: "You are quite sure that on the day of the murder Nānū was not present in the field."

Boy: "Yes, quite sure."

The defending counsel then sat down, leaving the Bench decorously amused, and the prosecuting counsel with feelings which may be better imagined than described. But he rose to the occasion and, asking leave to re-examine, thundered at the boy:

Counsel: "Do you dare to tell me that Nānū was not present at the time of the murder?"

Boy: "Yes, I am sure that he was not there."

Counsel: "How far were you away from the scene of the crime?"

And like a flash the answer came.

Boy: "Six sen¹ and fourteen wah²."

Even the Court was taken aback with this riposte, but the Counsel stumbled on:

Counsel: "What do you mean by telling me such nonsense? How on earth do you know you were that precise distance away?"

To which the boy replied by giving the *coup de grâce*:

Boy: "Because I went with the man who measured it."

That finished it, for the counsel collapsed, temporarily at least; and when he recovered and was asked whether he wished to call any more witnesses, sadly said, no, he did not. Thereupon the Court, without any further ado, dismissed the charge and ordered the prisoners to be set free.

In less than a week, however, the Court was again sitting, this time with our Hindu friend, Nānū, in the dock on a charge of perjury in a capital case. When the charge was read out to him, he at once admitted the offence (he could not well do otherwise), and stated that he had been promised four hundred rupees by some rival Hindu traders of the Pathans if he would give evidence against them.

After all the due formalities had been observed, Nānū was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, but before he left the Court-house I asked leave of the presiding Judge to put one question to him, prompted, I admit, by sheer curiosity:

"Have you received your four hundred rupees, Nānū?"

All I received in reply, as the prisoner turned to go, was a sad shake of the head. So he got his two years for nothing, and later on, when I paid a visit to him in the local gaol, he reflected bitterly on the lot which had befallen him, and at the same time propounded a new view of the moralities. His philosophy went thus: "When I told lies, nothing whatever happened to me; but when I stood up and boldly spoke the truth, then I was given two years' imprisonment." This, I think, would have pleased Gilbert.

Writing of Indians reminds me of another story of an Indian baker, whose Lao wife had run away from him, and who came to me for help in his trouble. He admitted that her reason

¹ A sen = 40 metres.

² A wah = 80 inches.

for running away was because he beat her, but, as he said, "If a man may not beat his own wife when she is naughty, whom may he beat?" Still he promised, the generous heart, that if I would persuade her to return to the family hearth, he would beat her no more, *or at least only a very little!* But I told him that I had not yet reached that stage of madness when I was prepared to interfere between husband and wife—and he went away sorrowful.

Our final subject for this chapter is a brief account of the produce and trade of the North. We have already dealt with the main source of wealth from a commercial point of view, namely, teak, in the chapter on European Intercourse; so we shall only refer briefly to that again.

The general population is purely agricultural, and the chief product is rice. The area under rice-cultivation in Bāyāp and Mahārāt, taking an average of the last five years, is roughly 1,300,000 'rai',¹ with a yield of 7,700,000 piculs, or about 460,000 tons, practically all of the 'Khao Nio' or 'glutinous' type. 'Khao Chao,' the white rice of the South, is not at all appreciated in the North. The above yield gives an average of about 6 piculs per 'rai,' or 2000 lbs. per acre, and provides between 5 and 6 piculs per head of population. On this basis it can be seen that there can be but little left for export annually, and some anxiety is making itself felt that a shortage of padi may soon occur, since, with the advent of the railway to Chieng-mai, several rice-mills have been set up and considerable quantities of padi and also husked padi are now being sent to Bangkok for sale, of the 'Khao Nio' as well as of the 'Khao Chao' variety, which latter is being grown in some districts in the place of 'Khao Nio.' It will be necessary for the Government to watch this movement carefully, and to see that sufficient rice is kept in the north to meet the needs of the people. At the same time, with better communications and a well-regulated irrigation system, the production of rice in Northern Siam could be greatly increased.

Land is held by the peasants either by 'Bai Yīap Yām' (which gives squatter's rights) or by 'Chāp Chōng' (which gives virtual possession); the system of regular title-deeds, in use in half the Circles of the country, has not yet been extended to the North.

After rice the principal agricultural produce of the North consists of tobacco, cotton, pulse, maize, sesame, and sticklac.

Of tobacco, the area under cultivation in 1924 was 14,000

¹ 5 'rai' = 2 acres.



A STREET IN CHIANGMAI.



TWO LAO CARRIERS, WITH A KHAMU CARRYING A KAREN GONG.

'rai,' and the yield 28,000 piculs, or about three and three-quarter million pounds (one quarter of the total production of the Kingdom). This gives an average of 3 lbs. per head, and as the whole of the population, men, women and children, smoke during most of the day, there is nothing left for export. A further reference to home-grown tobacco will be found in the next chapter on Customs, but nowadays the all-pervading 'Eagle-bird' and other products of the Imperial Tobacco Company are tempting the youth from their allegiance to the home product.

Of cotton the same may be said. Scarcely enough is grown for home consumption to supply the households with the necessary material for weaving their own clothes, which most of them do; and a good deal of cotton yarn is imported from abroad through Burma.

The area under cotton in 1924 was only 4600 'rai,' and the yield 8400 piculs, or 1,100,000 lbs., but there are large areas in the North, East and Centre of Siam suitable for cotton-growing, and a little encouragement might increase the production ten-fold. Even as it is, the production varies considerably, as in 1923, the previous year, the area under cotton was 12,000 'rai,' and the yield 24,000 piculs, or 3,200,000 lbs.

Considerable quantities of pulse and sesame, varying as with the other products from year to year, are grown in Bāyāp, but not apparently in Mahārāt; while a certain amount of maize is grown in both, but in either case only for local consumption and not for trading purposes.

In fact, it may be said that, until the recent boom in sticklac took place, teak and elephants, with pigs and a little silk, formed the only articles of commerce in the North.

The production of sticklac has been growing gradually during the last few years, and has now reached very considerable dimensions, owing to the increasing demand from America. Sticklac is obtained from the twigs of certain trees, of which *Cajanus Indicus* is the most important, on which a particular type of insect, while imbibing the juice of the twig, secretes a resinous deposit, the lac. It is chiefly used locally for dyeing silk and cotton, but it also provides for export the best kind of polish for furniture, namely, shellac, and a new and growing use has been found for it in the manufacture of gramophone records. It is also used in the manufacture of sealing-wax and insulating material.

The export of sticklac from Siam for 1923-24 was valued at two million ticals (£180,000), and for 1924-25 at the

substantial figure of 3,693,000 ticals (£336,000), but, although a large part of this came from the North, there is also another quality which comes via Kōrāt from the eastern and north-eastern plateau of Siam.

The chief live-stock of the north consist of elephants, of which there are said to be about 3,500; bullocks, about 517,000; buffaloes, 440,000; pigs, 162,000; and horses, 20,500.

The elephants are used for dragging teak, and also as transport animals. The buffaloes are used solely on the fields, for ploughing; the bullocks and ponies make good pack-animals, while the former are of course also slaughtered; and the pigs form an article, both of slaughter and of commerce.

Industrial life has scarcely touched the North as yet, and probably will not do so for many years to come. In and around Chiengmai there are a few local industries such as lacquer-working, silk-weaving, and pottery making, but none are of any great importance.

The lacquer-work, which is mostly done on plaited bamboo, finds a fairly good market in Bangkok, the chief articles being betel-nut sets and boxes of all kinds, as well as water-bottles. But, although the quality of the lacquer is gradually and slowly improving, it is by no means yet equal to the lacquer produced in Pagan, the ancient capital of Burma, to say nothing of Foochow or Japanese ware. The colours used are, as a rule, red, black and gold.

The silk woven in Chiengmai is undoubtedly of good quality, and many of the skirts which are made from it are extremely beautiful, the colours used, purple, orange, green, red, blue, and silver, being harmoniously blended so as to obtain a number of charming 'shot' effects. At the same time it must be said that a good deal of the silk yarn is imported from Mandalay in Burma, and is not a production of Chiengmai itself.

Nān also produces, in rivalry to Chiengmai, a large selection of beautiful silk and cotton skirts, by many considered the finest in Siam; and certainly the designs and colours chosen are in nearly every case both bold and pleasing. The Nān *silk* 'sīn' that I saw, which were made in the Palace, were of the finest quality.

Also, in many another district may be found a type of cloth woven in designs peculiar to the locality.

Graham, in his book, 'Siam,' speaks of a pale grey, glazed pottery, which is produced in Chiengmai; and there is also a quantity of red and black porous earthenware produced in a village about 20 miles from Chiengmai. But the trade in

them is negligible, and practically all is made for local use; though I have seen the grey, glazed ware passed off by the pawnshop dealers in Bangkok on the uninitiated as early 'Sung,' which it does resemble superficially.

The chief feature of recent years in the commerce of the North has been the gradual decline of the trans-frontier trade with Burma, most of it now going north or south by rail through Siam.

On the other hand, trade with the Southern Shan States has increased greatly during the past few years, and a constant stream of pony and bullock caravans now comes down the main road from Kengtung. No doubt a good deal of this trade eventually reaches Yunnan Fu, and thus Bangkok is becoming a seaport for Southern China, too.

Steady progress is being made by the State Railway and Highway Department in extending the various roads around Chiangmai and the other principal centres of trade, and also with the metalled road going due north from Lampāng to Chiang Rai, a distance of 150 miles. This road has already reached Mē Ngao, a distance of 60 miles, and even from there can be traversed by car throughout its entire length, though the surface of the remaining portion is still only of earth.

The new steel bridge at Chiangmai has now been completed over the river Mē Ping, and has proved a boon to the community, as it will take both motor-cars and elephants without restriction.

Speaking in a general manner, with the opening up of the country by communications, the north of Siam is going gradually forward, and the next ten years will no doubt witness greater strides still. The east side is much more backward than the rest, and, unless the teak forests are opened up again round Nān, there is not much scope for development there, but in the far north, just south of Chiang Rai, there are enormous tracts of land just waiting for a population to cultivate them. There have been rumours for some time past that large bands of Japanese are coming to Siam to take up land in this district for rice-cultivation under the new treaty which has just been signed between the two countries, but it is doubtful whether this will eventuate.

Complaints are heard at times regarding the high cost of freight on the railway. For instance, it costs over ticals 300/- to bring a motor-car from Bangkok to Chiangmai, but no doubt freights will come down as more rolling stock becomes available and the Department is able to cope with the expanding trade. Moreover, the importation of motor-cars seems to grow rapidly,

in spite of the freight, and there are now reported to be over 170 in Chiangmai, mostly of the Ford type, which is more suited to the climate and roads than any English make.

The chief article of import is, however, cotton goods, of which the annual value is estimated at over a quarter of a million pounds sterling; and, in addition, the railway brings up increasing quantities of petroleum, matches, china, glassware, and cutlery. Against this, the country exports teak, sticklac, silk piece-goods, and now, it appears, also rice.

As regards teak, the number of logs which paid duty at Paknampoh during the financial year 1923-24 was 111,000, while another 14,500 went down the Mèkhōng to Saigon, extracted by the French East Asiatic Company.

Sticklac and rice have also already been referred to in this chapter; but it may be added that the trade in silk piece-goods has been given a great fillip by the fact that nearly all Siamese ladies of good social position are adopting the 'sin' instead of the 'panung' for daily wear—much to their own personal advantage; and, as they are allowing their hair to grow, too, they now have a chance of taking their proper place in the realm of Eastern beauty, instead of serving, as hitherto, merely as foils to their Lao and Burmese sisters.



GROUP OF YOUNG BUDDHIST PRIESTS AND NOVICES.



GROUP OF LAO CHILDREN IN THE FAR NORTH.

(Note the method of carrying infants, by quite small children, too.)

CHAPTER VI

Life and Customs

IN many parts of Southern Siam, when a child is born, there still obtains, unfortunately, a custom which we may well regard askance. If the child is the first born, the mother must lie, day and night, for thirty days, surrounded by hot wood fires, burning on square and open, mud hearths. The husband and the wife's mother take it in turn to tend these fires and keep them burning. If the couple have further children, a shorter period will suffice for the lying-in, but it must never be less than fifteen days. This custom is much rarer among the Lao, but it does occur in the North in certain cases, and is worth describing. It is still common among the Môn, and may possibly be of Môn origin. It is also still in general use in French Indo-China.

The mother must cover up her temples and her stomach with black bands of cloth, tied very tightly, so that the blood will not mount. Fifteen days she will lie with her head towards the north, and then fifteen days with her head towards the south. Usually she eats very little, but may take food when she feels inclined, and in the evening she may get up and bathe in warm water. During the day she is allowed a few visitors.

If this gruesome custom is not observed, many people firmly believe that the woman will both see and hear 'badly' throughout the rest of her life. There must also be no chance for her to smell anything of an evil nature. If she does, she will become 'phī bā' (mad), and so all doors and windows must be shut. Also a fine thread of white cotton yarn is fastened to the walls all round the room in which she is lying.

In considering the nature of this custom, it has already been shown how, although the formal religion of the people, the decoration of life, is Buddhism, their whole lives are intimately bound up with animism, represented by a large company of 'phī' or spirits, who must be propitiated or disaster will befall. The idea underlying this custom, therefore, seems to be that, when she has given birth to a child, the mother is in her most acute state of receptivity, and as there are always malignant spirits lurking about, who are only too anxious to cause harm, every effort must be made to guard the mother from possible dangers, which may affect the whole future course of her life.

In addition to the other precautions, which are taken to keep away the 'phī pai,' as the spirits who attack young mothers are called, a piece of netting in the shape of an awning, about 12 feet square, is hung over the mother, so as to cover her completely. No spirit will be able to penetrate this covering; if it attempts to do so it will be caught in the meshes of the net.

If the mother is not well and strong enough, after the thirty days have elapsed, to resume her normal life, her own mother and her husband's mother will come to her and 'măt mŭ,' that is, bind each of her wrists with thread. This rite is said to possess great efficacy in strengthening a woman after child-birth. As soon as she is well the thread is removed.

One simple practical explanation of the fires is that they are lit in order to keep the temperature of the room even. But whatever the original reason may be,¹ there is no doubt that the custom just described *has* an effect on a woman's after-life, yet unfortunately not in the manner desired, for the usual result is that, if a well-built, attractive girl becomes a mother, as she usually does, at the age of twenty or twenty-one, within seven or eight years she will probably suddenly collapse, and become old, haggard and lined. It is as if the vital spark had become suddenly dimmed. I remember a case well, of a woman who appeared in Court to give evidence. She looked to me to be about forty-five years old, and I still recall my astonishment when she turned out to be but twenty-eight. It was clearly an instance of the effect of being 'roasted' at child-birth.

After its birth the child itself is wrapped up and placed in a '(Kra)-dŏng,' that is, a low round bamboo tub, and a thin white thread is run round this tub to keep the evil spirits away. It is of course given to its mother every day to suckle, but it does not sleep with her. For this purpose it is laid on a tiny cushion inside the tub.

When the child is a month old, it is put in a cradle, suspended either from the ceiling or from uprights standing on the ground. The cradle has a wooden base, with sides made of netting and a wooden frame at the top. When the child is about three months old it receives a name.

But a few days after the birth has taken place, another interesting custom is observed. All the family relations are gathered together in the parents' house, and the ceremony is performed, of finding out whose spirit has been born again in the child.

¹ In Lower Siam only one fire stove is used, and this is placed by the woman's side, for the purpose of keeping her stomach warm. It is thus a kind of hot-water bottle.

A small ball of boiled rice is taken, and into it is firmly fixed a line of thread about a foot long. The oldest woman present holds this thread between her thumb and forefinger, so that the ball of rice is hanging free. Then the name of each dead relation is called out, and the spectators look eagerly to see if the ball of rice is beginning to spin round. As soon as it does so, it is clear to all present that the spirit of the ancestor named at that moment has been born again in the child. It is immaterial whether the child is a boy or a girl, the names of male or female ancestors may be called out, irrespective of its sex, and one may go back as many generations as one pleases.

When this part of the ceremony has been carried out, the old woman then asks the ball what the spirit of the ancestor named desires, whether gold, or jewels, or clothes, or land—and when the ball has answered, the names of the company present are called out to discover who must give the present to the ancestor's spirit. As soon as the ball spins, the person named at that moment must present the gift desired to the child, and must bind its wrists. The gift will be kept by the child's mother until it is grown.

An interesting point in connection with birth, which may be noticed in passing, is that, in reckoning ages, the Tai always add on the nine months they have been in their mother's womb.

Up to the age of three or four, children as a rule wear no clothes. In Central and Lower Siam there is a custom for tiny maidens to cover their nakedness with a heart-shaped shield of silver, called a 'Täping.' This 'Täping' is attached to a string which is fastened round the waist, but the Lao, being rather more arcadian, scorn such pretence of modesty and prefer to leave nature unadorned. Indeed, one rarely sees the 'Täping' in the north of Siam. Foreigners should be careful of the original use of Eastern ornaments before using them themselves, for one European lady caused considerable silent amusement to her friends by wearing a 'Täping' as a pendant round her neck.

Mention has just been made of the presentation of gifts to a child by its relatives. It will be well then to add here that if, at any time during his life-time, a father gives his son or daughter any valuable gift, such as a house or an elephant, he will assemble all the relatives of the family, and in their presence tie a separate white thread round each wrist of the girl or boy, as the case may be. If the gift is an elephant, he will also tie a white thread round each of the animal's tusks, if a male, or each ear, if a female. This is known as the custom of 'mät mū,' literally 'tying

hands,¹ and is observed at all the chief ceremonies through a person's life. Its significance in this case is obviously a solemn earnestness, or 'binding,' of the contract, but its motive in other cases is not so easy to understand. In some cases it is meant as a blessing, or as a talisman against harm. For example, every year in the Royal Palace at Bangkok, on the 1st of April, a number of guns are fired in honour of the New Year. During the firing of the guns, the spirits of the air will become alarmed and angry, and fly about hither and thither, seeking some one to attack. On the morning of the day appointed, therefore, a large bundle of white cotton yarn thread will be blessed by the priests and placed in a position in the courtyard of the Palace where the officials can scramble for it. Each official who desires protection will snap off a piece of the yarn and bind each of his wrists with it, separately. He will then be immune from all attention by the spirits.

In Bangkok and Central Siam the tonsure or 'top-knot cutting' ceremony has hitherto been a most important one in the lives both of girls and of boys, and takes place just as they reach the age of puberty. This ceremony, which marks a definite change in a Siamese child's life, and which is ably described in W. A. Graham's 'Siam,' is not observed, as far as I could learn, among the Lao. To-day, even in the South, the custom is dying out.

Up to the age of ten a boy remains at home, playing in the streets and generally running wild. At ten he is sent to the nearest temple school, where he is taught his letters and his prayers by the priests. His early years do not need much detail, for children are much the same all over the world, whether white or brown or yellow. All are apt to play truant from school whenever the opportunity occurs, and the punishment, when they are caught, is usually the same—a good spanking. The older form of education has, of course, now been modified by the new Compulsory Education Act.

When the boy reaches the age of fourteen or fifteen, according to his mental capacity, he will either leave the school or become a novice or acolyte; often, at this time, if he stays at school, he will change the name originally given him at birth. He will remain an acolyte at the temple for a year or two, and then will come the parting of the ways.

If the novice is not to become a priest, he begs permission

¹ The custom of 'mât mû' is said to be of Chinese origin. There children's wrists are tied with red thread at funerals and other ceremonies, to bring good luck and keep off the evil spirits.



A LAO BOATMAN AND HIS SON, 25 MILES NORTH
OF LAMPANG.



TWO LAO HEADMEN OF VILLAGES.

from the Abbot or Head Priest to leave the school and retires into ordinary life. Clever boys sometimes remain until they are eighteen. But if he desires to enter the priesthood, the boy will continue to study the Buddhist Scriptures, and to perform his duties as an acolyte until he reaches the age of twenty, when he will undergo his initiation into the brotherhood. For this purpose there is a special ceremony.

On the day before the ceremony is to take place, the relatives and friends of the novice will go to the temple and beg permission from the Head Priest to take the boy home. When permission has been given, a procession is formed, with the novice in the middle dressed in a white skirt and jacket, and threads its way through the principal streets of the village or town, to the accompaniment of much beating of drums and gongs, so that everybody may know the importance of the event.¹ That evening the parents of the boy will give an entertainment, and all his family and friends will bring him useful presents, such as cushions, candles, betel nut, and rice. On the following morning, about eight o'clock, the villagers will accompany the novice back to the temple, and offer gifts to the Abbot and a number of other priests; usually about twenty in all. When the Head Priest has received the novice back again, the villagers will remain outside, and the priests with the novice will go inside the temple. The Abbot with seventeen of the priests will sit and group themselves on the floor under the shadow of the large image of the Buddha which stands on the main altar. But the novice will take up his position between the two remaining priests, and all three will pace up and down the temple floor, the priests reciting the oath and the novice repeating it after them, until it is finished. If there is more than one novice to be initiated, they will walk two at a time.

The novice must then sleep inside the temple itself during that and the two succeeding nights, and some of the villagers will usually sleep with him. During these three days he may eat rice before noon, but only fruit afterwards. The whole day is spent in constant prayer.

Attached to every temple are two buildings, the larger one called a 'Wihān,' which is used as a general assembly hall, and the smaller one a 'Bōt,' which is used for all important ceremonies, especially the initiation of priests. At intervals round the 'Bōt,' sometimes inside, but usually outside, are fixed stone 'Sēmā,' which form the boundaries and enclose the limits of

¹ These processions also take place at the time of ordination of novices. In fact, most of those seen are for that purpose, there being far more novices than priests.

what may be termed 'hallowed ground.' These 'Sémā' are set up on stone plinths and show a striking resemblance in form to a bishop's mitre.

As may be generally known, the Buddhist priesthood is a celibate one, and any priest convicted of intercourse with women is unfrocked and severely punished, in the old days sometimes even with death.

Although in the north of Siam, as elsewhere in the past, man has arrogated to himself the lordship of life, it must not be thought that woman, apart from motherhood, plays an unimportant and servile part in life. There is no such thing as the 'purdah' system, as prevails in India, and the female influence is usually strongly pronounced.

The women of the North, in the hey-day of their youth, are comely, well built and attractively dressed. They do not wear the Siamese 'pănŭng,' nor do they cut their hair short, like their sisters of the South. They are in appearance more like the Burmese women, and their skirt or 'sin,'¹ which differs in design in each locality, is distinctly original in character. Some, especially those from the Nān and Wieng Sā districts, are very beautiful.

Lao girls being then so attractive, it is not to be wondered at that the Lao youths readily fall in love with them, and so we come to the second most important event in the individual's life, namely marriage.

In the olden days there was no actual marriage ceremony, and to-day among the ordinary village folk there still is none.

A youth falls in love with a girl, and if the tender passion is reciprocated, they cohabit for three or four days in her parents' house. The mother of the girl then sends presents of areca nut, candles, flowers, and 'bai plū' (betel leaves for rolling the nut in) to the parents of the man, in order to propitiate the 'phī rūan,' or spirits attached to his house. The mother does not go herself, but sends friends as intermediaries. If the man's mother gives her consent, then the youth makes suitable gifts to his bride, and the young couple continue to live with the girl's parents as man and wife. If the young man comes from a different town, or is not known to the 'Kāmnān' and 'Phū Yai Bān' (village elders), he is examined first, and in some cases he may be required to give security for his good faith. This security usually takes the form of money.

If there is more than one daughter in the girl's family, and

¹ A collection of Lao 'sin' of various designs is to be seen in the Royal Museum at Canterbury in England

the second daughter wishes to marry, then the first couple leave the house and set up an establishment of their own. It is never the custom for two couples to live with the girl's parents at the same time.

In building the house itself for the young couple, and otherwise in assisting them to make a start in life, the parents of both parties help, if necessary.

It is only in the case of wealthy people, who wish to show their social position in the community, that an actual ceremony takes place. In this case there is no previous cohabitation, but the parents of the youth send intermediaries to ask for the consent of the parents of the girl to the marriage. If the young man is acceptable, then the latter name the wedding day and invite all their friends and relations to the ceremony. The maiden remains alone in her room, until the bridegroom arrives with his parents and friends. Then she is led forth by her friends, and, in the presence of the assembly, the elders of the village or district bind the wrists of the young couple together, the man standing on the right, and the maid on the left.

They are then led solemnly into the bridal chamber and left there. After this there is much feasting and rejoicing among the assembled guests.

When the couple have been married two or three days, the parents of the girl send gifts to the parents of the bridegroom, as in the case of poorer folk, to propitiate the spirits of the latter's house for their loss.

No settlements are made at first, in case the man should desert his wife, but as soon as a child is born, then a settlement may be made by either one or both of the parents. These settlements may, in the case of wealthy persons, take the form of gold (gold is often hoarded in the shape of bangles), elephants, or even a house and land.

If the girl is an only daughter, the couple usually live with her parents always, but at the due time the man will receive his share of property from his own parents.

In the old days it was considered unlucky to marry at the age of twenty-one, twenty-three, or twenty-five; one should always marry at an even age. I do not know its origin, but nowadays no attention is paid to this superstition. Also, in the olden times a man seldom married before he was twenty years old, but now, if a youth has wealthy parents, he will take a wife at sixteen or seventeen. Similarly, girls marry at a much earlier age than before, from fifteen upwards, and have little scruple whether their years of age are odd or even in number.

As regards marriage in general, it should be clearly understood that Buddhism, the religious law of the land, does *not* authorise and set its seal on polygamy. The sanction which gives rise to the practice is of a purely negative nature, and all that may be said is that Gautama did not expressly forbid it.

But in most lands the question of polygamy is, in my opinion, more of an economic than of a moral nature, and so, in the North of Siam, where the sexes are more or less evenly divided, we shall not be surprised to find that monogamy chiefly prevails, at any rate in the rural districts. Is Harry to possess a galaxy of beautiful wives, while Tom and Dick have none? According to old Lao law, for a man to take a second wife without his first wife's consent was considered ground for a divorce.

No doubt the 'Chao' or 'ruling families' still have more than one wife, and also in the towns additional wives are sometimes taken by wealthy men as a mark of their position in this world. But the conditions just described are sufficient to show the impossibility of a *young* man, at any rate, having more than one wife. He could not make his home with the parents of two girls at the same time. It is clear that polygamy can only be possible when the man has set up his own establishment. As a matter of fact, the country-folk are almost entirely monogamous.

While on the subject of marriage, I cannot omit a reference to the Book of Manu, the great Law-giver of India and Burma, since, if not closely followed, his 'statutes' are at least much respected by the Lao of North Siam; and in that book may be found the views of Indian mankind on the duties of wives some two or three thousand years ago. How far would these views commend themselves to our lady wives to-day?

In the 13th Chapter of the Eighth Volume thus it is written:

"Women are like the earth, and men are like rain and by the earth and rain, trees and fruits and such are produced. Trees and fruits are like children; and when man and woman, like the earth and rain, are suited to each other, (then) only are children produced.

"A good woman is one who corrects and assists her children and slaves and provides for her husband the best food and clothes; who puts in order his bed and the place he stays in; who provides for him the best perfumes, flowers, betel, tea, and things of that kind; who has no thoughts of other men, and who takes the greatest care of what is acquired by her husband; who rises before him, and who, after he has gone to rest, puts (the house) to rights before she sleeps; who



A YOUNG LAO.



A YOUNG KHA-MU WITH TURBAN OFF.



YOUNG KHA-MU WITH TURBAN OFF.



YOUNG KHA-MU WITH TURBAN OFF.

considers each day what will be her proper work, takes his orders, who disputes not his authority, who complies with his wishes, who speaks in the mildest and most endearing language, who provides for warmth and coolness. In this way all women should in the most proper way minister to their husbands, and women who habitually practise this fulfil their duty to their husbands.

"Thus the lord recluse Manu said."

We have travelled far since the days of Manu. But I have a shrewd suspicion that, even in those early days, women in the North of Siam had acquired, by virtue of their capacity for work, as much authority as their western sisters even now possess. To-day a Lao wife is a very important factor in the household.

After the contemplation of such a model household, as is depicted by Manu, it will seem unromantic to introduce the subject of divorce, but, although it need not detain us long, we must consider it for a moment.

Just as, among the village folk, marriage takes place by mutual consent, without ceremony of any kind, so is divorce also a mutual arrangement. If a couple agree to separate, each takes the property which was brought to the marriage, and if there is anything remaining, it is divided equally between the two. Of debts, according to local law and custom, the man is required to pay two-thirds and the woman one-third.

Sometimes the woman receives a letter from the man, testifying to the fact of divorce; which letter she will show to her new husband, whenever she contemplates marrying again.

If the couple have much property, or if they cannot agree upon a division, they must go to the Kāmnān or 'district elder,' who will act as arbitrator, and draw up an agreement between them. If he fails in this, then the couple must have recourse to the official Courts of Law, where the local lawyers will take their toll of the property involved, and make both parties realise to the full what an expensive luxury domestic quarrels are.

Before we leave our brief survey of marriage and divorce among the Lao I should like to touch upon the subject of coins. I have in my possession a set of five coins, or rather tokens, of silver alloy, in the shape of flat or almost flat shells. One side, which is quite flat, is covered with a yellowish-red substance, which I am told is the burnt yoke of a chicken's egg; the other side, which is slightly convex, is black and ribbed or corrugated. The 'coins' vary in size from the largest, which is $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $2\frac{1}{2}$, to the smallest, a tiny token, $\frac{1}{4}$ an inch square. They are

called 'ngõn hoi,' which means 'shell money,' although another name used for them is 'ngõn tők.' (See Chapter XIV, Plate I, Nos. 1 to 5.)

I have been given to understand, on reliable authority, that these tokens were, and are still made, solely for use in the ceremonies of marriage and divorce.

When a man marries, he will give so much weight in 'shell money' to the bride's parents, and if he divorces his wife, again he must pay according to his position and means.

We have now considered the two most important events in life, namely, birth and marriage, as they are treated among the Lao people. But before we reach the final scene of all, and 'sit upon the ground and talk of death,' I would like to speak of certain other aspects of their life.

Unlike the Southern Siamese, who take two meals daily at eight and at five, the Lao eat three times a day, at eight, at noon and at six. These meals are known as 'Khao Ngai' (chao), 'Khao Tawn' (tiang), and 'Khao Leng' (kham).

The standard dish for all meals is curry and rice. Northern rice is, as I have said before, not like the rice grown in Central Siam, but is of a glutinous nature and, when cooked, is eaten in lumps rather like bread. The curries are made of fish, pork, beef, buffalo, vegetables, chickens, duck, and wild birds of all descriptions. Sometimes goat-flesh is also used, while bear and deer are considered a delicacy, especially among the jungle-folk.

After the curry and rice, betel nut is chewed, and this is followed sometimes by 'miang,' a species of wild tea, which is also chewed in small balls, like a quid of tobacco. Water is usually drunk after the meal, but not with it. Also fruit is usually eaten at odd times during the day, but not with a meal. The fruits to be found in the north of Siam are much the same as those grown in the South, but on the whole are perhaps not so good.

The principal are:

Melons of various shapes and sizes; 'Mă Tao,' like a green melon; pumeloes; limes; oranges of different kinds, and sweet limes; tomatoes; mangoes; jack-fruit; pineapples; pomegranates; coconuts; mǎprāng (a kind of plum); custard-apples; and tamarind. Tomatoes and pineapples are not indigenous, but the pineapples to be found in Phrê in the month of June are remarkable in size and delightful in flavour.

¹ The words in brackets are the Siamese equivalents of the Lao words given for 'morning,' 'noon,' and 'evening.'

Also, in addition to these, practically all European flowers and vegetables, such as roses, lettuce, beetroot, cauliflower, and even asparagus, can be and are grown in Chiangmai, Lampāng and other centres during the cold season.

Most of my readers know that betel-chewing is a common habit among Eastern races, but it is not all perhaps who know exactly how betel is chewed, at least in the north of Siam. The nut itself is not a 'betel' nut, but is obtained from the areca-palm. This nut is ground with a kind of pestle and mortar, and is then mixed with white lime and dried tobacco in a little water. The red colour, associated with betel-chewing, is imparted by the addition of the bark of the 'sīslat' tree (called cutch). The soft mass formed by all these ingredients is then rolled in the betel leaf, called 'bai plū,' and a bite is taken through the mixture. As may be imagined, the taste is an acquired one. The ingredients are not, as a rule, mixed all together in the South, but are eaten separately; the cutch is, however, mixed with the lime, and then smeared on the leaf.

Betel-nut sets are made in lacquer, silver, brass and gold, and an interesting collection may be made of the different kinds of lime-pots in use. Some of these are both original and charming in design and shape. The so-called 'pestles and mortars' are also well worth attention from a collector's point of view.

We were all told at school that Sir Walter Raleigh introduced the tobacco weed into England. I wonder who was responsible for its introduction into Northern Siam, and when. If, as doctors say, smoking is an injurious habit for the youth of a country, then a heavy load must rest upon the unknown pioneer, for the whole population smokes all day long, men, women and children, from the time they can hold the cigarette between their tiny fingers.

The tobacco is all grown and cured locally, and the cigarettes made are wrapped in various kinds of leaf. Green banana leaves, dried banana leaves, the leaf of the areca-palm and the petals of the lotus—all are used in varying degrees. Dried-leaf cigarettes cannot be bought in the market, as a rule, but must be made in the home. Green-leaf cigarettes are those commonly smoked, and some years ago could be bought at about ninepence a hundred. The leaves are first heated to make them stiff, and then ironed. Areca-palm leaves and lotus petals are treated in the same way, but cigarettes wrapped in these are rather more expensive to buy, and are therefore not so often seen. In the olden days, the people waited until the leaves dried on the trees, but now they are too impatient, and the supply of naturally-dried

leaves is not large enough. The gum used in fastening the leaves is obtained from the 'lūk Tồn Măp'n,' a small green berry with a yellow resin inside.

The Lao people as a race are very musical, and many a night, while travelling through the countryside, I have listened with rare pleasure to my syces and servants playing the most plaintive love melodies upon their pipes. It is wonderful how the music of a country is attuned to the conditions of its setting.

There is a great diversity of instruments in use in the north of Siam, but the following are, I think, those most commonly seen.

1. The 'Piăh' is a long instrument, with four strings, terminating in a brass elephant's head. At the other end is the scalloped top of a coconut shell, which acts as a sound-box. This is placed on the breast, and the instrument is played with a small plectron on the little finger. It is thus a kind of mandoline. It is in common use to serenade young ladies at midnight, but it is not regarded favourably by the police, as it is also used on occasion as a weapon of offence.

2. The 'Seung' corresponds to a banjo with four strings, and is usually made of teak-wood. I had always imagined that the banjo was the peculiar property of the negro, but there seems no reason to doubt that, as used among the Lao, it is an original instrument.

3. The 'Pi' is a pipe of polished bamboo, a particular kind of which is used, called 'Mai Lai.' It has a series of holes for stops, and is played like a piccolo. It is never played in company with other instruments, and a 'Pi' orchestra usually consists of three performers.

The 'Pi' is largely made in the district of Söp Yao, some ten miles south of Lampāng.

4. The 'Klūr' is similar to the 'Pi' in appearance, but corresponds to, and is played like, the flute.

5. The 'Khên' is a long reed instrument with fourteen reeds of varying lengths, all clamped together, with a round mouthpiece about a foot from the base. It is perforated just above the mouthpiece with a series of holes for stops. It is usually about five and a half feet in height, at its tallest point, and actually represents a miniature organ. It is said to have originated in Luang Prabāng, which is now in French territory. I cannot express the quality of this instrument better than by quoting from Graham's 'Siam,' when he says, "with its low sweet tones the 'Khên' is eminently adapted to the plaintive and fugitive



GROUP OF LAO AND KHAMU FORESTERS, THE LATTER WITH TURBANS.



A LAO AUDIENCE AT A WAYSIDE ENTERTAINMENT.

airs so characteristic of the music of Siam. It is one of the few instruments which appeal immediately to the ears of eastern and western people alike, and its gentle tones, which charm the village maidens of Siam to tears, have been heard with scarcely less moving effect in London drawing-rooms."

6. The 'Sô' is similar to the 'Piäh,' only shorter, and has two strings instead of four. The sound-box is made of buffalo horn, and it is played with a bow, the hairs of which are taken from a horse's tail. This is therefore a kind of viol, though the instrument rests on the ground, and not under the chin of the performer.

7. The 'Rănāt,' or xylophone, is much in use at entertainments. The body is fashioned in a semi-circle, sometimes in the shape of a boat, but generally quite plain in appearance. Its height is only a foot or so above the ground, so that the performer has to squat in the centre of the instrument to play it. Twenty flat bars of bamboo are laid across the body and fastened to it by cords. These bars are struck with short wooden hammers, and the tones given forth are pure and resonant.

8. The 'Chĩng' are small brass cymbals, often beautifully made, attached together with a string, and

9. The 'Chāp' are large cymbals, also made of brass.

10. Of 'Rākǎng,' or instruments with bell-like qualities, there are three kinds in the North of Siam.

There is, first, the 'Rākǎng Yai,' or great bell, used in monasteries for calling the priests and novices to prayers. Then there is

11. The 'Rākǎng Mǒn Klǒm,' a round flat piece of copper or brass, plain in appearance, and

12. The 'Rākǎng Ngĩang,' a small flat piece of brass, with the outline of a mandarin's hat in profile.

The two last-named are priest's bells which are carried in front of them on the end of a string by acolytes, and struck with a short piece of hard wood. Formerly they were always carried, but now they are only used for three days after the novice has become a priest. Even Abbots do not use them nowadays. As regards processions, they are not used in ordinary ones, but only in those in which an image of the Buddha takes part. The 'Rākǎng Ngĩang,' for all its peculiar shape, has a very sweet tone when struck.

13. The 'Kǒng' corresponds to our gong, whether large or small, whereas

14. The 'Klǒng' of the North is the great drum peculiar to the monastery. It is made of part of the trunk of a tree hollowed out, and covered at both ends with buffalo-hide.

15. The 'Klǒng Eao' is the drum usually carried in processions. It is fashioned out of wood and, if stood up on end, resembles closely a large old-fashioned drinking cup. The mouth of the cup is covered with buffalo-hide, fastened by strips of leather to the base of the drum.

Of these instruments, the 'Klǒng Eao,' or 'waist-drum' (so-called because it is carried on the waist), the 'Kǒng,' or 'gong,' and the 'Ching,' or 'small cymbals,' are carried and used in processions at Sǒngkrān (New Year), and other public festivals.

At important funerals it used to be possible to obtain another kind of band at a moderate cost. This band consists of six performers, playing respectively:

1. A 'Klǒng Yai,' or big drum.
2. A 'Klǒng Lek,' or small drum.
3. A 'Pāt Kǒng,' formed of a series of small gongs fixed in a wooden circular frame. The performer sits inside the circle to play it.
4. A 'Chāp,' or pair of large cymbals.
5. A 'Ching,' or pair of small cymbals.
6. A 'Nê,' or flute, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet long.

The band sits on the hearse and is drawn to the cremation-ground by the people, playing appropriate music the while; but it is very difficult to obtain in these days, and then only at great cost.

At ordinary funerals, the 'Seung,' or banjo, 'Sô,' or viol, the 'Piăh,' or mandoline, and 'Klǔi,' or flute, are played together by a small band in the house of the deceased, before the hearse leaves it; but they do not accompany the procession. They are also usually employed by the parents of a boy, who is about to become a novice, at the entertainment given in his honour on the night before his initiation takes place. The procession which accompanies the youth back to the monastery on the day in question is usually assisted by a band, composed of a 'Klǒng Eao Yai,' or large waist-drum, a 'Klǒng Wăt Lek,' or small temple drum, a 'Nê,' or flute, a 'Chāp,' or large pair of cymbals, and two 'Kǒng Yai,' or large gongs, six performers in all.

There is just one point to emphasise before leaving the subject of musical instruments. Do not confuse the 'Kǒng' with the 'Klǒng.' The 'Kǒng' is our 'gong,' while the 'Klǒng' is a drum.

It has been mentioned that images of the Buddha are sometimes carried in religious processions, and this thought turns one's mind to the method by which these images are fashioned. It is, in fact, the 'cire perdue' process, but as this may be new to many of my readers, it will be of interest to record it.

First the artist moulds his image in fine reddish clay (dīn dāk). This image is then covered with a thick coating of beeswax to the depth of the metal required in the finished image. The beeswax is covered again with ordinary earth, and the whole is then fired. In this firing the clay and the outside earth become baked, but the beeswax naturally melts and flows out, leaving an interval between the clay model and the covering of earth.

All this while, assistants are preparing the metal to be used in making the image in pots of red clay, covered with a thin coating of iron. In the olden days all kinds of metal were used, especially gold for the heart, while silver, tin and copper were all thrown into the pot as occasion demanded or offered. Tin and copper usually preponderated, but many images were made of 'Nāk,' a composition of copper (about 80 per cent.) and gold (about 20 per cent.). Also images of the Buddha made of 'Thong Sāmrit,' a composition of a number of metals which is said to contain a large proportion of gold, are much prized.

Three or four assistants are employed as a rule, each with his pot suspended from an iron tripod. Only teak-wood can be used as fuel for the fires, and this fact probably accounts for the presence of so many teak-trees in the precincts of temples in the North.

When the composition becomes liquid, the clay model with its outer covering of earth is fixed in a reverse position, and the molten metal is poured into the interval left by the beeswax. When cold, the outer covering of earth is removed with a knife, and the image given to the artist again, to finish and polish. In the larger images, the crown ('yôt' or 'săt') and the knobs of hair ('késā') were usually made separately, and fixed on to the image subsequently.

The making of images of the Buddha was always in the old days conducted with a certain degree of ceremony, and a screen of cloth, four-sided, was usually erected, to keep away inquisitive, curious folk. Those concerned in the making, that is, the artist and the smelters, were always clothed in white, while outside the screen at the four corners knelt four priests, offering up prayers for the success of the work and asking a blessing upon it. According to custom, images were never made in the

afternoon or evening, because tradition has it that the Buddha was born in the morning.

The old folk say that no presentable images have been made for three or four generations, and that the art has been lost. This may possibly be so, but for all that the gentle art of forging ancient images is carried on to-day with no small measure of success. The rogue fraternity are well aware of the desire many Europeans have of making collections of the images of Buddha, and, by disfiguring their creations and burying them in the ground for a number of months, are able to turn out a supply of passable counterfeits, which find a ready sale.

If you are travelling through the countryside and obtain permission to spend the night in a village temple, which will be always open to receive you, remember to place your bed so that your head will rest beneath the Buddha's kindly care. If you turn your feet towards him, the insult you offer will be no less than the sin you commit.

The conventional form of the Buddha's image is known as 'Phrā Sadūng Mān,' and is that in which one hand rests in the lap, the palm uppermost, and the other rests on the knee, the palm downwards. The meaning of 'Phrā Sadūng Mān' in the North of Siam is said to be 'The Buddha frightened by the Burmans,' and the local legend is as follows:

Once upon a time there were two Phyas, or nobles, named Nākā Sēn and Sōkārāt, living in the North of Siam, who, after consultation, decided to make a beautiful image of the Buddha, but they could not make up their minds, what material to use.

Eventually they agreed to fashion it out of 'Paitūn,' a stone only to be found on a certain mountain, which was strongly guarded by giants. Nothing daunted, they set off on their quest, and when they arrived at the mountain bravely asked permission from the giants to dig for the stone they were seeking. But the giants refused, saying that they were guarding the 'Paitūn' for someone else, and suggested that they should seek a spot, still on the mountain side, but outside their dominions, about a mile and a half distant, where they would find a precious stone, even more suitable, called 'Kéo Mōrākōt,' a stone of many brilliant hues. Accepting this suggestion, the two Phyas went to the spot without delay, and dug up enough of the 'Kéo Mōrākōt' for their purpose. This they brought home, but when they set to work to fashion the image, they discovered that they had no instruments strong enough to cut the hard stone, and were much troubled at heart. Presently, however, Phya In, i.e. the god Indra, who watches over the Buddha's interests,



A GROUP OF LAO VILLAGERS.



LAO GIRLS, VARYING FROM 16 TO 22 YEARS OF AGE.

became aware of their difficulty, and sent down an emissary (Téwäbüt) to help them.

When the 'Téwäbüt' reached the earth, he sought out the Phyas and, explaining that he had been sent by Phya In to help them, asked to be given a knife. In their eagerness both the Phyas went to fetch the knife, but to their great astonishment, when they returned, they found a most beautiful image already made, and the 'Téwäbüt' vanished. The image so made had both the hands folded, resting in the lap, in the attitude known as 'Sāmāti.'

The fame of this miraculous image soon spread abroad, far and wide, until it reached even into Burma; and so jealous did the Burmese become, that they gathered an army together and attacked the Lao, to wrest the precious Buddha from them.

When the image saw the Burmans coming to seize him, he became excited and, raising one hand, placed it on his knee, thinking to rise and flee. The Burmans advanced on both sides, firing as they came, but the bullets of those on his left, even as they sped through the air, turned to flowers and fluttered quietly to earth, while the bullets from the right glanced harmlessly off his body. When the Burmans saw that their bullets either turned to flowers, or had no effect, their hearts became weak as water, and there was no courage left in them, for they feared the wrath of Buddha. So they were easily defeated by the Lao and driven from the land; and the attitude taken by the image, with one hand on the knee and the other in the lap, was called 'Phrā Sādūng Mān,' and from that day became the conventional form for all time.

It is possible that this legend is in some way connected with the famous 'Emerald Buddha,' now in Bangkok, though it would not appear to be of great antiquity from the mere mention of bullets, unless these latter have been recently substituted for some more ancient form of missile used in the original form of the story. In any case, it is based on an entire misconception of the word 'Mān,' which in Lao is used to denote 'a Burman,' but which, in its true sense, is the Siamese form of 'Mārā,' the Prince of Evil; and in Siam the conventional form of the Buddha is meant to symbolise his fight with Mārā.

The mention of bullets gliding harmlessly off a body brings to our minds the subject of talismans and amulets, which are much worn by the Lao folk, to avert dangers of all kinds. Such a custom is not difficult to understand among primitive Eastern villagers, when we think how little advance even the educated Western mind has made in the matter of superstitions. But

what is interesting and not so easy to grasp, is the fact that formal Buddhism smiles upon it and encourages it.

Nearly all talismans worn by the people have previously received the blessing of the priest, and such amulets would usually not be considered effective, unless they had received this blessing.

One of my mahouts, during my stay in the North, was a redoubtable elephant hunter from the Kōrāt plateau, and I remember him telling me that, as long as he wore his amulet round his neck—an amulet which the priest had blessed—he was prepared to tackle the wildest and fiercest of elephants, but without it he could never have brought himself to the point of doing so.

Most of the northern races, but the Shan in particular, are fond of making incisions in their bodies, all over the chest, and embedding small rubies and sapphires in the flesh, in the belief that the presence of these stones will keep them unscathed from harm. The marks made by the cuts in the flesh become blue in the course of time, and present a very odd appearance, especially as the man is also, as a rule, copiously tattooed with figures of beasts and dancing girls and horoscopic signs.

Small square pieces of iron pyrites, if blessed and carefully carried about the person, will always prove efficacious in the event of a bite from a mad dog. Rhinoceros' horn is especially lucky, and I much prize a little brass box for lip-salve in my possession, which has a small piece of such horn at the base, and which I was told would bring me good fortune for ever. I have already referred to this box in Chapter III.

Also a very small, short, blunt horn, sometimes found on the forehead of a deer, called 'nô kwāng,' may be a very powerful friend, if it has been tested properly and not found wanting. The test consists in putting the horn into a bowl of rice, and in calling the chickens to come and eat from the bowl. If they actually come and eat the rice, the horn is of no value, but if they decline on inspection (as they probably will, at the presence of a foreign body) then it is of great worth, and the possessor will meet with no accidents or misfortunes. The horn, if of value, should always be encased in a tiny cage of wire strings.

But the most elaborate amulet I met with in the North consists of a set of long strings, cased at intervals in cylinders of brass or copper. One such string is worn round the waist; one round each of the biceps; one round the neck; and one round the ears, passing under the chin.

Before these strings have any value as a charm, they must

be tested in the following manner. The would-be wearer takes an osier reed and, after expanding his chest to its full extent, measures himself with the osier, which he breaks off at the exact length of his chest measurement. Then he gathers up all the strings and, placing them on his body in their proper positions, prays to the Lord Buddha that the osier reed may shorten. The prayer concluded, he takes up the osier and measures the full expanse of his chest once more. If he cannot make the osier meet, then the charm will hold good, but if the two ends meet, then the charm is worthless.

This talisman, if it has passed the test, is a very powerful one, for it is not only a charm against rifle-bullets and cuts from swords, but it will even sometimes prevent a gun from going off.

It will not, I am sure, have escaped your notice that here again the Buddha is asked to give his blessing on the charm. Considering that his whole teaching was directed against superstitions and charms, it seems a little hard that he should be confidently expected to give encouragement to such practices; but human nature is very confident, where its own interests are involved, and no doubt the Teacher makes due allowance for the frailties of his servants.

However this may be, when a man's time has come, in the north of Siam as elsewhere, no charm is found that can keep out the visitor who beckons to us all in turn. So now we have reached the final stage, and there only remains for me to give you a short description of the ceremony that takes place at death.

When a Lao villager dies, his family wash the body with water, and clothe it in a 'pănŭng' and a new coat, which is put on inside out with the buttons facing inwards. The reason for this is that the dead man has become a 'phī,' or spirit, and spirits always wear their clothes inside out. The wrists are tied together (even in death we cannot escape from the habit of 'mât mŭ'), and flowers and candles are fixed in the hands. Then the body is 'laid out' on a new mat in the centre of the room, and a string is fastened to either wall, running across the centre of the body at a height of six inches from it. This supports a cloth which covers the body, while a light is placed just above the head.

Meanwhile, as soon as the person has died, others of the family begin to make a small basket frame-work of wicker. This, when finished, they hang upon a string across the doorway of the house for three days, to prevent the evil 'phī' from entering the house. Sometimes this basket, called a 'taleao,' is never taken down.

The body remains alone for one night, but the next day the coffin is made, and in the afternoon four priests are called to offer up prayers for the dead. As soon as this rite has been performed, the body is placed in the coffin, which is nailed down. The priests are given presents of rice, betel and fruit, and then depart home to their monastery.

According to the deceased's rank and station in life, the interval of time which is allowed to elapse between his death and the actual cremation of the body¹ varies from two or three days to six months or even longer. In the villages the average interval is at the most a few weeks; but as long as the body remains in the house, the four priests come on every 'wăn phră,' or holy day, to chant and recite prayers; and every morning at 7 o'clock the family take offerings of cigarettes, betel-nut and fruit to the priests engaged.

On the cremation day, all the friends of the deceased are invited to join in the funeral procession. When they are all assembled, the priests will again offer up prayers for the dead, and then the coffin is taken out of the house and conveyed in procession to the burning-ground, where the funeral pyre has been already prepared. There the body is burnt, and each relative or friend will speed the departing guest on the way to his next re-incarnation by placing a lighted candle or shaving of wood on the funeral pyre. As soon as it becomes possible, the ashes of the deceased are gathered together and kept by the family in an urn or small pot.

In speaking of musical instruments I have already described the number and types of bands which are engaged for funeral occasions.

When the cremation ceremony is over, the priests and the people return to the house of the deceased, and another short service is held, after which the priests return home, and the ceremonies are at an end. But if the deceased was an important personage, the relatives, as a rule, make the funeral an occasion for an entertainment after the cremation ceremony has taken place. I do not wish to convey the impression of an Irish 'wake,' for the Lao folk on the whole are an abstemious race, but the bands will continue to play throughout most of the night, and the friends of the deceased will sit and talk, and drink tea till the early hours of the morning.

Let us hope that they spend those hours profitably, in recounting the virtues of the dead.

¹ The body is not cremated in all cases. Sometimes it is buried.



LAO HUSBANDMAN BRINGING IN 'ATTAP' GRASS FOR ROOFING HOUSES.



LAO GRANDMOTHER WITH SMALL CHILDREN.

CHAPTER VII

Religion and Animism

IN a previous chapter it has been told how, some years after the death of Kāwilōrot, the Prince of Chiengmai, a Siamese High Commissioner was sent to reside at Chiengmai for the first time. The 'History of Yōnākā,' gives the year of this event as 1874, but from the graphic account of his life written by the American missionary, Dr. Daniel McGilvary, in 'A half-century among the Siamese and Lao,' it seems tolerably clear that this took place in 1877.

Dr. McGilvary, having been not only an eye-witness, but also a direct actor in the events which, as I have said, hastened the appointment of the Commissioner, is not likely to have been mistaken in the year, especially seeing that he was on furlough during the greater part of 1874, and did not arrive back in the North until the autumn of that year.

Dr. McGilvary originally arrived in Siam in 1858, and was at first stationed in Bangkok and Petchaburi. But in 1863 a chance offered to go and explore the North of Siam, and in November of that year he and a companion paid a visit to Chiengmai, reaching that city early in January, 1864, after a journey of just seven weeks.

They found the conditions there so promising from a missionary point of view that, in 1866, taking advantage of the presence of Prince Kāwilōrot in Bangkok, they obtained permission both from him and from the Siamese Government to establish a mission in Chiengmai. They had no conception then of the opposition and trials they would have to meet later on—and I have no doubt the Prince himself had formed no particular animosity towards them at that time—and left Bangkok full of confidence on January 3rd, 1867. Dr. McGilvary has left behind a vivid account of that journey. It took him and his wife a month to reach Raheng, and nearly another month 'toiling up the thirty-two rapids' of the Mē Ping, and it was not until the 3rd of April that they eventually arrived in Chiengmai, thus taking exactly three months over a journey which now occupies 25½ hours; and yet it happened less than sixty years ago. Travelling in those days, moreover, was not without its serious dangers, for he records that one of the staff of the Borneo Company, who was to have followed them to Chiengmai in February

on business connected with their teak trade, never arrived at all; and it was not until July that they received a note from him to say that he had been attacked by robbers below Raheng, he himself seriously wounded, and his boat looted of every portable object.

The missionary soon found that his medical knowledge was in great demand among the hill folk, and in fact among all the different peoples with whom he came in contact, and who had nothing more satisfying than witch-doctors to turn to in their hour of sickness. He also quickly made many friends among the Prince's family, and when, in 1868, he and his wife were joined by Mr. Wilson, the companion of his former trip to Chiengmai, he succeeded in making his first baptised convert. It was in this year that the Prince of Chiengmai, who had returned to his native land once more, presented the Mission with the site which it still occupies on the east bank of the Mê Ping.

The first signs of trouble came in 1869, when the rains ceased at a critical time, and the padi crop was largely ruined by the drought. It was freely spread broadcast, largely through the agency of a Portuguese adventurer who had won his way into the service of the Prince, that the missionaries had offended the 'spirits' by their work and presence, and the latter had withheld the rain. Petitions were actually sent to Bangkok, both to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the United States Consul, to have the missionaries removed on this particular pretext.

The reply which was given by the American Consul was a distinctly humorous one. He said that, from evidence collected, it appeared that the scarcity of rice had begun the year before the arrival of the missionaries and was not confined to Chiengmai, but extended over all the northern provinces. The scarcity, therefore, could not with justice be attributed to the missionaries, but he added that, in order to avoid all further trouble, he would enjoin upon the missionaries to be careful not to cause any famine in the future.

All this while the Prince himself showed no animosity towards the missionaries, but treated them kindly and dined with them; and even after the agent of the Borneo Company at Chiengmai had warned them that the Prince was plotting to expel the missionaries and to exterminate all converts, they still remained incredulous.

In September, 1869, the Prince started off on what purported to be a fishing trip, but was in reality planned so that he might be absent when the persecution began. The next move took

place on the 13th when all the missionaries' servants left them, but when they complained to the official acting for the Prince in his absence, he professed to have no knowledge whatever of any designs against the Christians. They lived for two weeks in entire ignorance of what was going on around them, but they then discovered that two of their principal converts in Chiangmai had been clubbed to death, on the pretext that they had not brought in, as ordered, their slabs of timber to repair a stockade at the proper time.

Realising that their missionary work and all their converts, and possibly their own lives as well, were in danger, they despatched one of their oldest servants to Bangkok with letters asking for help, but soon received news that his boat had been intercepted and he and his family killed. This fortunately turned out to be only a rumour, and they learnt later that the man actually arrived at Bangkok in safety and delivered his letters at their destination. In the meantime, at the end of September, they persuaded a friendly Burman of some influence to take another letter to Bangkok.

From that time until the 26th of November they had no news of what was being done on their behalf in Bangkok, but they then learnt from messengers sent on in advance that a Royal Commissioner had arrived in Lamphūn, with a large train of men and elephants, and would be in Chiangmai the next day. Two associates of the American Mission accompanied the Commissioner, and on the morning following his arrival, the 'Thống Trā,' as the Royal Letter of Command was called, was carried in State to the Prince's palace under the Royal Umbrella, and the golden tray containing it was placed on a stand near the middle of the hall.

The actual contents of the Royal Letter proved, however, to be very mild in tone, merely giving the missionaries the option of staying or going as they wished, and the Prince, who had arrived in a state of suppressed rage, was much relieved to find that there was no reference to the 'murder' of Christians. In reply to an address by one of the Missionaries from Bangkok, he merely said that he had no desire to place any hindrance in the way of their obtaining servants, and he had only put to death a couple of his own subjects for failure to perform their work, as he had a perfect right to do.

But Dr. McGilvary, who was present at this audience, realised that their future position would be intolerable if matters were allowed to remain in that state, so he boldly stood up and charged the Prince with not speaking the truth. He said that there was

not a man or woman in the audience, nor in the whole country, who did not know that the two men had been put to death for no other reason than that they were Christians. The accusation of failure to do government work was only a flimsy pretext, and there was no truth in it. Even if there was, no single form of law had been observed, but, by the Prince's own order, they had been treacherously arrested, led out into the jungle and cruelly clubbed to death.

This unexpected challenge had the desired effect. Flinging caution aside, the Prince in a passion exclaimed that it was true—he had killed them because they had been converted to the Christian religion, and he would continue to kill every one who did the same. Turning from the religion of their country was rebellion against him, and so he would treat it. The missionaries might remain to treat the sick, but they must not make Christians. If they did so, he would expel them.

Matters had now been brought to a crisis, and the Commissioner, who knew the Siamese Government were still rather afraid of this 'wild man of the north,' and who did not wish to bring down trouble on his own head or on that of the missionaries, was anxious for the latter to withdraw from the country.

But Dr. McGilvary was clever enough to appreciate that the Prince's attitude at the audience contained a good deal of bluff, that he had no intention of casting off his allegiance to Bangkok (it happened in the second year of King Chulalongkorn's reign), and that in more sober moments he would realise he had gone too far.

Moreover, the Prince had been previously summoned to Bangkok, and was on the point of departure; he would not therefore desire the American missionaries to arrive in Bangkok before him and to anticipate his story of the events. Dr. McGilvary, accordingly, decided to call upon the Prince and, as he expected, was received with unwonted cordiality. The Prince's manner showed that he was pleased with the advance made, and he agreed that the Missionaries might remain until after his return from Bangkok, and take all the time needed for a comfortable departure. Time was what the Mission wanted, and as the Prince was not likely to return for at least six months, they would gain it. Much might happen in the meanwhile, and in any case all fear of further persecution was at an end for the time being.

When the Commissioner returned to Bangkok, to be followed soon after by Prince Kāwilōrot himself, the advice at first given by their Siamese friends to the Mission was to withdraw. But,



OLD LAO HUNTER AND FOREST GUIDE.



AN OLD LAO VILLAGER.



AN OLD LAO FROM NAYONG.



as the Lao Prince had formally given his consent to the establishment of a Mission, the United States Consul insisted upon the Siamese Government giving a guarantee for the fulfilment of promises publicly made by its vassal State, and pointed out to them that, although in his own State he might be like a tiger in the jungle beyond control, once he was in Bangkok he was in their power and they could make their own terms with him.

As sometimes happens at critical moments, the solution of this difficult question was rendered easy, for Prince Kāwilōrot suddenly became dangerously ill in Bangkok, and died at Lamphūn, before he could reach his home again, on June 29th, 1870. Dr. McGilvary gives an interesting account of the funeral procession:—

“The body was brought to Chiangmai in a long and imposing procession of soldiers, monks, and people marching to the wailing of the dirge and to the slow, solemn beat of drums. Chao Intanon was at the head of the procession on his State elephant, and not far behind was the body of the dead Prince, borne on a golden bier and accompanied by a long train of yellow-robed priests. Behind this was the vacant throne, and on it the royal crown.

“About ten o’clock (in the morning) the procession approached the city which, by inexorable custom, may never open its gates to receive the dead. On reaching the south gate, therefore, the procession turned to the right and passed on outside the city wall to the east gate. There, in the Prince’s summer garden, beside the river, his remains lay in state until the great cremation ceremony a year later.

“Meanwhile a lamp was kept burning at the head and at the foot night and day. A Prince was in constant attendance, and courses of monks chanted the requiem for the Buddhist ceremonial for the dead.”

The next in line of succession, who was made Chief of Chiangmai, Chao Intanon, was not so terrifying a personality as Kāwilōrot and, being a friend of the missionaries, he assured them that they would be allowed to remain and pursue their work without any hindrance. Thus all chance of strife and discord was removed by the intervention of Providence, and the Mission remained in possession of the field they had gained.

Dr. McGilvary adds a shrewd note on the character of old Prince Kāwilōrot, when he says that the Prince “could never have endured to see his people becoming Christians—not that

he cared much for Buddhism, but it would have been a constant challenge to his autocratic rule."

The death of Kāwilōrot and the accession of such a friendly Prince as Chao Intanon obviated all necessity of direct interference for the moment by the Siamese Government in the affairs of the north, and it was not, as already stated, until some years afterwards, in 1877, that the appointment of a resident Siamese High Commissioner at Chiangmai was made.

As Dr. McGilvary relates, up to the death of Kāwilōrot the Lao provinces, which now form part of Siam, had been virtually free States. They had never been conquered by the Siamese in war, and their association with Siam had been a voluntary one in order to free themselves from the yoke of Burma. They acted as a kind of buffer State between the two, and added strength to the one with which they sided; but their natural ally was Siam, since they themselves were of the same race, and their sea communications were through Bangkok and the Menam Chao Phya, while a range of high mountains separated them from Burma.

Since the foundation of the Bangkok Dynasty, the Lao chiefs had been required to pay triennial visits to the Capital, to present their gold and silver tribute, and to renew their oath of allegiance. But otherwise they were free, and in his own country each Prince had absolute rule, with which the Siamese in no way interfered. Even the establishment of the Mission was only permitted by the Siamese Government after the approval of the Prince of Chiangmai had been given.

But the outer world was now beginning to penetrate into the fastnesses of the North, and the Bangkok Government found that interference was becoming more and more necessary. The exploitation of the teak forests was proving a valuable asset to the country, and the rapacity of the Lao Princes in giving the same concessions to different persons, mostly Burmese British subjects, in return no doubt for valuable consideration, was landing the former in endless lawsuits entailing the giving of judgment by the Siamese Government (often against the Princes), and thus leading to constant friction between the North and South.

It is possible, as Dr. McGilvary says, that, had Chao Intanon had a strong character, the old feudal relations might have lasted for another generation or two. But Chao Intanon was too weak a man to hold the reins alone for long, and all the power gradually fell into the hands of his half-brother, who had been appointed 'Upārāt,' or Deputy-Chief. This man had shown himself hostile to foreigners, and particularly to the

Mission, and it was partly the anxiety felt by the Siamese Government in this regard that led directly to the appointment of the High Commissioner.

This official proved himself an admirable man for the purpose, and soon made his influence and presence felt. Without encouraging their efforts to proselytise, he was friendly to the Mission, principally because he was rabid in his opinions regarding animism or the worship of the 'phi'; and in 1878 an incident occurred in connection with this worship that brought him altogether on to the side of the Mission, and led him to exert the Royal Authority over the local Chiefs in a very direct and open manner.

It seems that two Christian converts were about to be married, but that the family patriarch—an opponent of Christianity—had threatened to prevent the marriage unless he was first paid, as head of the family, the 'spirit' fee, originally designed to furnish a feast for the 'spirits,' a sum amounting to not more than six rupees. This the young couple naturally declined to pay, but the old man proving obdurate, the bride's father became alarmed and said that some official support must be found before the marriage ceremony could be allowed to proceed. Both the High Commissioner and the Prince were approached, but, although they sympathised, they declared they could not interfere in such matters for fear of giving offence; while the Upārāt, who was the only person that could have settled the affair at once, absolutely declined to do so, and said that the King of Siam alone had authority to interfere in such a question.

It happened at that time that the High Commissioner himself was having a good deal of difficulty with the local Chiefs, as was inevitable, and was looking for some occasion to exert the Royal Authority, which he considered was being challenged. So he encouraged the Missionaries in their desire to appeal to the Siamese Government for religious toleration, and advised them to petition the King direct.

When the petition was actually sent, the liberal policy of the young King, who had then been ten years on the throne, was such that the issue was never in doubt. The High Commissioner was instructed to draw up a Proclamation, and to publish it throughout the North (which he did with much satisfaction) to the effect that anyone might adopt the religion that pleased him, and that if any wished to become Christians no hindrance should be placed in their way—nor should they be enforced to do anything which their creed forbade them to do, such as the feasting and worship of demons.

This proclamation naturally became the Charter of the American Mission, and since that time they have experienced few difficulties at the hands of the authorities, either Lao or Siamese, but have been allowed to pursue their own way with what success they might obtain through the merits of their cause and the efforts of their members. On one occasion only, in 1889, there was trouble over a convert, who was imprisoned on the allegation that he had been telling his fellow-converts that they need not perform Government work. But the allegation proved false, and after some delay the man was eventually released, and the matter allowed to drop.

Now what kind of religion did the people already hold, whom the American missionaries wished to convert to Christianity?

The outward religion was Buddhism, which, according to hallowed tradition, was originally brought to Lamphūn, and thence spread throughout Northern Siam, by the Princess Chām Thēwī of Lāwō (Lopburi) sometime in the seventh century A.D. The form of Buddhism brought was Mōn (or Peguan), as already noticed, and if tradition is correct, it must have been introduced very soon after it came into Burma itself, for the Chula Sākārāt, or Civil Era of Burma, which dates from 638 A.D., is said to be calculated from the introduction of Buddhism into that country.

Later developments took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D., when the Sinhalese form of Buddhism was introduced, and much priestly intercourse took place between Ceylon and the North of Siam; and again, of course, from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, from the time when the Burmese took possession of the land, and built so many of the temples standing in the North to-day.

There are no records extant in brick or stone which can be attributed to the time of Chām Thēwī, but the 'History of Yōnākā' contains a curious and interesting account of how the Sinhalese form of Buddhism found its way to Chiangmai and Lān Nā Tai.

It seems that about the year 693 of the Chūlā Sākārāt (1331 A.D.) a Mōn priest of good repute and standing at Martaban had gone to Ceylon and entered the priesthood there, and had some years afterwards returned to Martaban and introduced the Sinhalese form of Buddhism into his native city. The name of that excellent Abbot was Phrā Uthūmpōn Būphā Mahā Sāwāmī, and his fame was such that it soon spread to the neighbouring country of Siam.

Now at that time there were two priests of Sukhōthai, Phrā



TWO LAO WOMEN, OLD AND YOUNG, THE ELDER SMOKING A PIPE
THE YOUNGER A CHEROOT.

Anōmātā Sṛī and Phrā Sūmānā by name, who had gone from Sukhōthai to the capital city of Ayudhya, some time after the date of its founding, and, having studied the Trai Pitākā (or Three Baskets, the Scriptures of the Buddhist canon) under many priests of learning and renown, had returned to Sukhōthai and taken up their abode under the care of the Lord Abbot, or Primate, Būpā Pātrā. But presently these two priests, who were adventurous souls, heard of the fame of Phrā Utūmphōn, and expressed a desire to sit at his feet for a while and imbibe his teaching. So, having received permission, they said goodbye to the Lord Abbot of Sukhōthai, and hastened away to the Mōn city of Martaban. There they received initiation into the new form of priesthood, and studied the 'Trai Pitākā' in the Sinhalese form for the space of four years. They then returned to Sukhōthai, and for ten years they remained at home, teaching the new form and spreading its popularity in the neighbourhood. At the end of that time they chose eight disciples from among their band, and once more went off with them to Martaban, so that the latter might enter the priesthood there under the tuition of Phrā Uthūmpōn, and afterwards help to popularise the Sinhalese form in Sukhōthai and the country around. As for the two priests themselves, after a short stay on their part in Martaban, Phrā Uthūmpōn gave them his blessing and sent them back as missionaries of the new form to Siam.

Phrā Anōmātā Sṛī chose Kamphēngphet as his field of labour, and Phra Sūmānā his native city of Sukhōthai, and there respectively these two remained, instructing their brother priests in the Sinhalese form and endeavouring to win the people over to the new style. It is on record that Phrā Mahā Thāmārāt, the Prince of Sukhōthai at that period, built a temple in the "San Māmūang" (the Mango Gardens), called 'Wāt Ampāwān,' especially for Phra Sūmānā and the new form. This temple was afterwards called Wat Pā Kéo.

There, while asleep in the temple one night, an angel appeared to Phra Sūmānā in a dream and spake to him thus:

"A portion of the relics of the Lord Buddha, which King Asōka distributed among the peoples, lie buried at the ruined 'Stupa' in the deserted town of Bāng Chā. There is a tall bush of 'Dōk Khem' (Ixora), in the shape of a horse, growing over the spot where the relics are buried."

On the following morning, when he awoke, Phra Sūmānā rose and, having taken leave of the Prince of Sukhōthai, set off as fast as he could go to Sachanalai (Sawankalōk), and brought

the glad tidings, as told by the angel in his dream, to Phya Lū Thai, the Prince of Sachanalai. Phya Lū Thai expressed great joy at the news, and gladly provided Phra Sūmānā with a force of labourers and tools for the purpose he had in view. With these for his company, Phra Sūmānā quickly repaired to the scene of the ruined Stupa in the old deserted city of Bāng Chā and, as a preliminary of his task, built a tall 'rān' on which offerings and prayers might be made to the Holy Relics to show some sign of their excellence and power.

When night fell, Phra Sūmānā ascended the steps on to the 'rān,' and, having offered up the requisite worship and prayers, looked around him for a sign from the relics. In a moment his eyes were blinded by rays of light darting from the bush of ixora, and, making it appear a blazing flame of fire; so he rushed down and planted a flag to mark the spot whence the rays had come. Then he retired to rest.

In the morning, as soon as dawn came, he called the labourers together and the digging began beneath the bush of ixora. They had not gone far when they came upon brick and stone, and when they had reached below these, they discovered a small box, about as big as an olive. Quickly opening the box, the eyes of Phra Sūmānā shone when he saw inside it the holy relic of the Lord Buddha, the size of a pea, but of the colour of bright gold. He first performed the rite of pouring holy water on the relic, and then returned to Sachanalai, where Phya Lū Thai, amid great rejoicings, offered up prayers and thanksgiving on a lavish scale. This done, Phra Sūmānā journeyed on with the relic to Sukhōthai to gladden the heart and eyes of Phra Mahā Thāmmārāt. But the heart of Phra Mahā Thāmmārāt was hardened, and he said that the relic had given no clear and unshakable proof of its power and origin; so he refused to acknowledge it, but gave permission to Phra Sūmānā to hold it, if he wished. So it remained with Phra Sūmānā in his keeping, but his heart was sore.

Now, at this time, Phya Kū Nā was King of Lān Nā Tai at Chiangmai, and when the fame of the renowned Mōn Abbot, Phra Ūthūmpōn reached him, he at once sent his son on a mission to Martaban to invite the venerable priest to Chiangmai, to examine the standards of Buddhism in his country. Phra Ūthūmpōn was an aged man by this time, and could not undertake the journey, but, not wishing to appear discourteous, he

¹ A 'rān' in this sense is a small joss-house, roofed but without walls, built on four tall posts. Normally 'rān' means 'a raised platform,' and hence is used to denote 'a market-stall,' or even 'a shop.'

sent a company of ten priests, with Phra Anānda at their head, in his place. The King of Chiangmai gave them a warm welcome when they arrived, and placed the temple called 'Wat Lōkā' at their disposal. But when he invited them to begin their teaching of the Sinhalese form of Buddhism in Lān Nā Tai, Anānda, their head-priest, replied, with respect but firmness, that Phra Uthūmpôn had set aside this northern country as the field for missionary labour of Phra Sūmānā, who lived at Sukhōthai, but that none of themselves, either young or old, had received permission to act the part of missionaries; if the King of Lān Nā Tai was anxious to receive instruction in the Sinhalese form of Buddhism, would he, therefore, be good enough to invite Phra Sūmānā to Chiangmai for the purpose, and they would all then be only too willing to help to spread the doctrine under his leadership and guidance.

Accordingly, the King of Lān Nā Tai appointed an embassy, consisting of Mūn Ngōn Kong with Pakhao Yôt and Pakhao Sai, and instructed them to proceed to Sukhōthai with presents to Phra Mahā Thāmmārāt, the Prince of Sukhōthai, and an invitation to Phra Sūmānā to come on a visit to Chiangmai.

Phra Mahā Thāmmā Rāt was pleased to agree to this invitation, and gave Phra Sūmānā permission to go. So Phra Sūmānā handed over charge of Wat Pā Kéo to his deputy, and departed with the embassy and his nephew, Kasappa, on his mission to Chiangmai.

Phya Kū Nā went out in state from Chiangmai and met Phra Sūmānā at Sên Khao Hô Chieng Rūa, and invited him to take up his residence at Wat Phra Yūn (the Temple of the Standing Buddha) to the east of Lamphūn, and from there to initiate as many young men as he pleased, or as came to him for instruction, in the new form of Buddhism.

Phra Sūmānā, and the ten Môn priests with him, planned a space, enclosed by imaginary 'bai sémā,' in the river Mê Raming (Mê Ping), near the Temple of Chantara Panit, and having first of all initiated Kasappa, the nephew of Phra Sūmānā, in that enclosure (presumably on a raft), then proceeded to instruct and to receive into the fold a number of young men from Lamphūn and Chiangmai.

The King of Lān Nā Tai showed himself so pleased with the doctrines and behaviour of Phra Sūmānā, that he raised him to the rank of Lord Abbot, with the title of Sūmānā Būpā Rātānā Māhā Sāwāmi. And this act of faith on the part of the King so touched the Lord Abbot, that he presented the King with the holy relic of the Lord Buddha that he had dug up in the old city

of Bāng Chā. When the ceremony of pouring holy water on the relic had been performed, the latter gave a display of its wonderful power by changing colour and in other marvellous ways; and finally, when they came to look at the sacred particle again, the King and the Lord Abbot found, to their astonishment and delight, that there were two relics where before there had been but one.

King Kū Nā was so exalted by this miracle that his faith in Phra Sūmānā increased mightily, and he built a temple called 'Wat Būparām' (the Temple of Flowers) in the Royal Gardens, the care of which he entrusted to Phra Sūmānā, together with a tall 'Stupa' for the especial purpose of holding the second relic of the Lord Buddha which had been vouchsafed to them in such a miraculous manner. And Phra Sūmānā lived twenty-one years at Lamphūn, and taught at the Temple of the Standing Buddha, before he left that Temple and came to take up his abode at the Temple of Būparām.

As for the first relic of the Lord Buddha, which Phra Sūmānā had brought with him from Sukhōthai, in order to discover a suitable place on which to build a 'Stupa' for its keeping, the olive-shaped box containing the relic was solemnly set upon the King's elephant, and the animal then released to see which path he would take.

The elephant turned his head and went straight for the gate of the city which leads to Doi Sūthép (the mountain overlooking the city of Chiangmai). Passing through this, he led the way until he reached Pālāt, where he rested for a moment; then on again until he reached the summit of the mountain, where he finally halted at a given place.

On that spot, on the summit of the mountain, the King of Chiangmai and Phra Sūmānā solemnly built and dedicated a 'Stupa' to hold the sacred relic in its keeping, in the year of the Rat, eighth of the cycle, Chula Sakarat 748 (A.D. 1386), and there this 'Stupa' is to be seen, even down to the present day.¹

This is the close of the narrative as given in the 'History of Yōnākā,' but it is interesting to know that the facts related, if somewhat highly coloured, are corroborated to some extent by external evidence.

Professor Coedès states that there is a temple at Lamphūn called 'Wat Phra Yūn,' which has niches containing Standing Buddhas (Phra Yūn), and that this temple is undoubtedly the one built for Phra Sūmānā.

¹ This is incorrect, as there is no 'Stupa' on the actual summit. The one probably referred to is about 2000 feet below the summit (see Chap. IV).



TWO GIRLS PLAITHING BAMBOO FOR MAKING LACQUER BOWLS.



VARNISHING THE FINISHED LACQUER BOWL.

Further, the 'Jinākālāmālīni,' already referred to, written by the Priest Rātānā Pānyā at the Temple of Pā Deng to the north-west of Chiangmai in the year 1516, clearly states that, after the Tai had conquered and settled in Lān Nā Tai, there was much religious intercourse with Ceylon, and relates how, in 1423, in the reign of Sām Fāng Kén, a party of thirty monks from Lamphūn and Chiangmai went to Ceylon to be initiated, and receive the pure ordination from the priests of the Temple of 'Mahā Wihān.' These monks came back in 1425 and, after first transmitting the pure form of ordination both to the priests of Ayudhya and Sukhōthai, finally returned to Chiangmai in 1430; and from this time the Sinhalese form of Buddhism spread all over Lān Nā Tai, to Chiang Rai, Chiang Sēn, and other places. There is no doubt that this pilgrimage was the occasion of a great revival of Buddhism throughout Siam, and to it we are indebted for the number of Pali scholars which it produced, like the author of the Jinākālāmālīni, who have left behind a permanent and valuable record of their times.

Yet, in spite of the vast number of temples built, the innumerable images of the Lord Buddha fashioned and venerated, the endless pilgrimages to the more famous shrines, the countless store of money spent on gold leaf and incense, and the armies of priests that have been ordained during all these past centuries, the Lao people remain at heart what they have been from time immemorial, from the earliest days in their ancestral homes in China—animists.

It is all very well to live a life of virtue and contentment, to lay up a store of merit for some future life, but that lies far ahead; what about the dangers and the evils to which we are exposed in this present life, and which are sure to fall on our heads, if we do not make offerings to propitiate and appease the 'Lords of the Upper Way,' as the host of 'Phī,' or spirits, are called.

So the peasant's life falls into two parts. He is ever willing to pay his devotions to the teachings of the Lord Buddha, and to tread the strait and narrow path as far as within him lies, so that his merit may increase and the 'Karma' handed on may prove such as to endow him with a higher rôle in his next existence. But, on the other hand, the doctrine is not easy to comprehend, and in the meantime he has his daily life and work to think of, in which, at every turn and thoughtful moment, the 'Phī' alone can help or hinder him. They must, therefore, be continually courted and feasted to this end.

Anyone who has lived in the North of Siam, and who has

employed the Lao for any length of time, knows only too well the part that witchcraft and the 'spirits' play in the lives of all, and how disastrous the results can be. In another chapter I tell the story of the dreaded 'Phi Phōng' (or ghouls), who spirited away two gendarmes. Here I will mention a few typical instances, some taken from Dr. McGilvary's, and others from my own personal experience, or from that of friends.

Dr. McGilvary speaks of one case, which came to his knowledge, and where, instead of the usual tragic ending, he managed to provide a happy one.

A 'mia noi,' or lesser wife, of one of the Princes had, at the Prince's death, married again, and had two sons by her second husband. In 1878 there were heavy floods, and much sickness in the district, and as somebody had to be found responsible, these two boys were accused of harbouring evil 'spirits' through contamination with their father, who had been suspected before, and of thereby causing the damage to the countryside.

At the Prince of Chiangmai's suggestion, the Mission agreed to take the whole family under their personal protection, and as soon as they had left their house, it was burnt down with everything in or connected with it.

But the boys foolishly went back to look at the old home and, as the sickness continued, they were said to be infesting the place with the deliberate purpose of spreading it; and the Prince of Chiangmai himself asked the Mission to give them up to the Lao Court, so strong was the feeling against them.

But Dr. McGilvary said that the case, if brought, must be tried before the Commissioner, and on one condition only. If it was proved, the family might be expelled from the district; but if the boys were acquitted, then the accusers must be expelled in their turn. As he expected, the case was then dropped, but it showed him what a boon the presence of the Siamese Commissioner must be to scores of families.

When I was living in Lampāng, there was the case of a pony-boy, a young and mild-tempered lad, who came and told his master one day with a very rueful face that he would have to leave his service. When the master enquired the reason, he said that he and his mother were being expelled from the district, because the latter had been accused and convicted of 'eating other people's livers.' And they both had to go.

Dr. McGilvary tells of an elderly man who was driven away from his wife and family and forced to live alone, because he came into possession of two elephants which had formerly belonged to a man who harboured 'Phi,' and the villagers would

not suffer him to remain among them for fear of his inheriting the 'Phī.'

And again, in the Lamphūn district, there was a great epidemic of fever in the early eighties, and the family of one of the most prosperous men in the village was fixed upon finally as the abode of the malignant spirit which caused it. They were warned to flee, but refused to do so, and so one day the entire village appeared at their doors and compelled them to leave.

As soon as they had gone, the whole of the property, consisting of two large teak houses, outhouses and rice-granaries, was torn down, and the place left completely bare. In the end the Mission obtained permission from the Governor to rebuild the house for a Church, and the family eventually returned and became Christians.

There are also innumerable instances of a man dying 'badly,' as the vernacular expresses it, of cholera for example, or a woman in child-birth, and the 'phī' embodied in these evils are so malignant that no peasant will buy the property of the deceased, for fear of inheriting the spirits with it. In this manner the 'unbelieving' and callous European is sometimes able to buy silver or other ware for a mere song, just because the owner died 'badly.'

One has only to mention 'phī' or spirits, for the word 'witchcraft' to spring to the mind, and Mr. Holt Hallett, in his 'A Thousand Miles on an Elephant,' gives a very good account of the 'spirit' of witchcraft, which is called 'Phī Kāh.' He says:

"No one professes to have seen it, but it is said to have the form of a horse, from the sound of its passage through the forest resembling the clatter of a horse's hoofs when at full gallop. These spirits are said to be reinforced by the deaths of very poor people, whose spirits were so disgusted with those who refused them food or shelter that they determined to return and place themselves at the disposal of their descendants to haunt their stingy and hard-hearted neighbours. Every class of spirits—even the ancestral spirits—are afraid of the 'Phī Kāh.' At its approach the household spirits take instant flight, nor will they return until it has worked its will and retired, or been exorcised."

It is a serious thing then to be accused of witchcraft, and if, after a searching examination which may include pinching and caning, the accused is found guilty, he is instantly expelled and his property destroyed.

Mr. Holt Hallett says that the old Burmese custom for the

trial of witches was similar to that practised in former times in England. The thumbs and toes having been tied together, the suspected person (usually a woman) was thrown into the water; if she sank, she was innocent (but presumably drowned), if she floated, she was guilty (and presumably burnt).

I myself have not escaped the attention of witch-doctors, and have to thank one of them for making me seriously ill.

While living in Lampāng, I had at one time a round-faced, chubby Lao boy for a body servant, who not only gave full satisfaction, but was a far more pleasant and agreeable companion than his predecessor had been. Ai Kham was his name. After he had been with me for some time I contracted rather serious interior trouble, and was placed on a diet of milk and water.

Now it appears that Ai Kham was not convinced of my appreciation of his services, and wanted to make me more fond of him. So he went to his father, who was cook to a friend of mine in Chiangmai and at the same time a doctor of witchcraft, and procured from him a supply of 'Yā Fēt,¹ a potion concocted of the foulest ingredients imaginable. This he administered to me over a considerable period of time, with the result above recorded, and it was only by the merest chance that I discovered it.

There is a village near Chiangmai where a locally famous porous earthenware is made, and the north is full of these porous jars, which are black or red, and which are well adapted for keeping water fresh and cool. I had jars of both colours in my house, in use as water-bottles, and one day, while Ai Khām was pouring out the water for my milk, I noticed that it was of a reddish tint. When I asked him the reason of this, he said rather sheepishly that it must have come off the bottom of the bottle; and when I reminded him that the bottle he had used, unfortunately for his reasoning, was a black one, he became very confused and had nothing to say. But my suspicions were aroused, and finally my Lao cook, an old and trusty servant, got the whole story out of him, with the inevitable consequence that he was given five minutes to leave. So, instead of making me appreciate him more, the only result of his potions was to make me appreciate him considerably less. I would like to think that it broke his belief in the efficacy of witchcraft—but I doubt it.

But, with regard to 'Phi,' although customs and superstitions die hard, yet the Lao folk have another side to their character, which requires still further probing and explanation.

¹ In Siamese 'Yā Sāné.'

I gained an insight into this side while travelling north of Chieng Rai. While passing through a village I noticed an unusual object lying under a small tree by the side of the road, outside a house. It was a small square basket made of green banana leaves, very similar to the leafy strawberry-baskets seen in England, and full of earthen forms, rough shapes of men and animals. I was told that these forms were propitiatory offerings to some malignant 'Phi,' as there was severe sickness in the house behind the tree. I said to the men with me that surely the offerings, to be of value, should be the bodies of real objects and not mere earthen forms. But they all replied with a laugh that it was of no consequence, as the 'Phi' would not notice the difference!

So, although animism is still deeply ingrained in the minds of the peasants and plays a great part in their lives, it would seem that the spirits are gullible, and that their propitiation is conducted not without a sense of humour.

But, to the European mind, it is rather difficult to reconcile the known belief in the power of the 'Phi' to bring down evil upon the people, with the practical jokes that are played upon them; and one wonders if education is at last beginning to produce an effect.

It should be said that not all the 'Phi' are bad or malignant, and there is one kind, namely, 'Phi Rüan,' or the 'Spirits of the House,' which may be compared to the penates or tutelary household gods of the Romans. These are of a kindly disposition, and a good story is told of how a new and unsuspecting missionary was trying to convert an old Lao woman to Christianity, and told her that, if she would allow his Master to come into the house, he would soon drive out all the 'Phi.' This upset the old lady altogether and, rising in her wrath, she dared the missionary to bring his Master into her house, for her 'Phi' was her guardian angel, and she could hardly conceive what disasters might happen if he were driven out.

This brings us back to the missionary movement, and their work in these regions.

Looking at the matter from a broad point of view, and at the general results of their labours, I agree frankly with Mr. Holt Hallett, who dedicated his book to the American Mission in Burma and Siam, that the work they are doing is both valuable and noble, in the face of great difficulties and much discouragement.

I know there is a considerable section of my own fellow-countrymen who regard missionary work among Eastern peoples

as unnecessary, if not actually harmful, on the ground that the people are not intelligent enough to grasp the substance of the Christian faith, and would merely be substituting one fetich for another.

But this type of mind is, I fear, the outcome of the same education as that of the old public-school boy in the Far East who, when the subject of the Bible was brought up for discussion among a number of his juniors sitting with him, said very shortly: "We don't want to talk about the Bible—that's the Padre's job—that's what he's paid for." This gentleman was, I am sure, not really irreligious at heart, but was merely expressing what his public-school education had taught him many years before, that religion has no part or parcel with our daily life, but, with the top hat and frock-coat, should be carefully packed away in a box, and only brought out for display on Sundays and other appropriate occasions. Was it not Lord Melbourne, who, after being forced to hear a sermon against 'sin,' exclaimed with righteous indignation: "A little religion in public—yes, that is permissible. But to bring religion, like this, into our private lives; why, it's intolerable!"

If you apply this attitude of mind to the missionary and his work, there is not, I admit, much to be said for him. In truth, it is an attitude of mind into which it is easy to fall, since it is not possible to mete out unstinted praise, and there are certain obvious defects which are apt to influence the superficial mind.

For instance, it is difficult to follow the proposition put forward seriously¹ that Buddhism is too atheistic to have anything in common with Christianity, and that animism is much more closely allied to the latter, as in worshipping the 'spirits' the peasants are at least reaching out at something higher, something supernatural beyond their ken.

It is true that Buddhism takes no account of the Creation of the world, and of an Almighty Father; but Gautama never denied the existence of God—he only replied, when asked, that the question was unprofitable, as there was no possible means of knowing; and that men should rather turn their thoughts to the conduct of life, to the noble eightfold path, which alone would lead them out of the sorrow and suffering of their earthly existence. It is true also, as I understand it, that Buddhism is a religion of pessimism, seeing that the sole purpose of its teaching is that earthly existence is miserable, nothing but suffering caused by desire; that everything is impermanent and changing, and that the best thing we can do is to kill desire and

¹ In Dr. McGilvary's book.



LAO POTTER AT WORK IN CHIENGMAI.



LAO ORCHESTRA USED FOR DANCING. *Note the peculiar drum.*

to escape from the relentless wheel of life, if we can. But, whether we agree with this teaching or not, we must admit that it presents an ordered and logical philosophy of life—and that the means of attainment, the noble eightfold path, demands as high a standard of conduct and ethics as does Christianity.

To say that the cult of animism, the worship of 'spirits,' represents a higher spiritual life than Buddhism demands, appears to me to do rather more than injustice to Buddhism, which expressly forbids their worship; while the Christian faith will scarcely draw comfort from the fact of being classed in the same breath with what can only be characterised as gross superstition.

But a more essential cause of disapproval of the Mission in Siam is that their authorities at home do not always make a careful choice of the men and women they send to the Far East; and that a number of missionaries arrive and begin their labours in the North of Siam, but ill-equipped in mind and character for the tasks they have to do.

I know the difficulty is to find the *right* men and women, not only for Siam, but for every field of missionary endeavour in the world, but the work of a missionary is very delicate and requires a special form of education and culture, if it is to be done with sympathy and success.

One constant source of general offence, not only to Siamese, but to their fellow-foreigners as well, is the exasperating use by mission-folk of the word 'idol' to describe an image of the Buddha. It reveals the lack of just those qualities of sympathy and knowledge that are essential in a missionary.

Our Christian faith teaches us not to bow down to gods of wood or stone, and if the Buddha were treated as a god in that sense, there would be no cause for complaint in the use of the word 'idol.' But, as Dr. McGilvary himself has said, Buddhism is atheistic, or, as I prefer it, non-theistic, and in no sense did Gautama lay claim to divinity or god-head; nor is he worshipped in such a sense, as any student of Buddhism or Buddhist countries knows, by any but the most illiterate and unintelligent folk. But Gautama was the Teacher of a 'Way of Life,' and as such has been a friend and comforter of countless millions of people throughout the East; and now that he is gone, the setting up and venerating of an image of the Buddha has much the same significance as hanging up the photograph of your dearest friend and mentor on the wall of your inner study, after his death. It serves to remind you of all that he meant to you, and perhaps it will help to make you a better man if you are

constantly reminded of his face and character. 'Out of sight, out of mind,' is one of our oldest and truest proverbs (as anyone who has lived long in the East knows only too well), and so the picture of the Teacher constantly at his elbow serves to remind the Buddhist in some measure of what is required of him, and helps his sleepy conscience to keep to the noble but narrow eight-fold path. But that image is not an idol, and anyone who regards Buddhism in that sense is not fitted to come among them to try and teach them another 'Way of Life.'

It would not be difficult to give more particular instances of want of understanding or sympathy, of which I myself have been a witness; but to do so might give an erroneous impression and cause them to be taken as representative of missionary conduct. I therefore refrain, and would emphasise the fact that the general examples quoted are given, not from want of sympathy with the Mission, but to show one side of the picture, and to make it understood why missionaries are looked upon askance by many lay Europeans living and working in the same country. There is no doubt that a number of men and women are sent out to the East, who are unfitted for the work, whose vision is limited by the parish pump, and whose own education (if education means development and culture) has scarcely been begun; and these folk are no credit to Europe, America, Christianity, or the Mission.

But there is another side to the picture, and I am satisfied that it is the true side, and that its merits far outweigh the defects of the other side.

If we compare the condition of Northern Siam fifty years ago and now, there is no room for doubt in our minds; at any rate, in the minds of those who know the conditions there now. Great credit must certainly be given to the British and other firms working the teak forests of Northern Siam for the last thirty or forty years, which have contributed very largely to the material prosperity of the countryside, and which have in this way been of valuable assistance to the missionaries, but that the great and manifest improvement in the life of the people generally is mainly due to the work of the missionaries themselves does not, to my mind, admit of any discussion.

Their educational and medical work alone is above all praise, and many outside critics admit and admire this, while denying the attempts of the Mission to 'proselytise the heathen'; but these critics forget one very important fact, namely, that the Mission are only enabled to carry on their educational and medical work by reason of the authority which their spiritual work gives

them; and that if you were to take the latter away, the whole movement would sink rapidly into obscurity and lethargy. 'It is the spirit which quickens.'

Since 1867 their centres have spread all over the North, to Chiangmai, Lamphūn, Lampāng, Phrê, Nān, and Chiang Rai, and their schools, hospitals, and churches are now an integral part of the country's life. To take only one instance of the work being done—Dr. McKean's Leper Hospital, on the island in the Mê Ping at Chiangmai, which I have visited and examined personally—no words of mine can give it its due. It is just human work at its highest and best; and as long as the American Presbyterian Mission continues to produce such men and women as the McKeans, the Harrises, and the McGilvaries—to name but a few without, I hope, making invidious distinctions—I shall regard its work with the greatest sympathy, and shall not wonder at the tolerance and kindness with which His Majesty the King of Siam looks upon their labours in the North. He, a Buddhist, knows the value of the work being done, and of the aid rendered by the Mission to the administration; and that, after all, is the best appreciation they can receive.

PART III
TRAVEL

CHAPTER VIII

From Chiengmai to Phrê

So far we have not done much travelling. I have taken you with me from Bangkok to Chiengmai by railway and road and introduced you to the land of the Lao, but for the most part our talk has been of history, commerce, religion, crime, customs, and contact with the outside world.

Now we are going to see the country and the people for ourselves and to set out on a long trek from Chiengmai, first back to Lampāng and Phrê, then north-east to Nān; then across the hills to Chiengmūan; due north to Chieng Rai, and old Chieng Sên; and finally back to Lampāng through Chieng Rai, Phayao and Mê Ngao. This will take us through the heart of Lao-land, and we shall cover a distance of between 550 and 600 miles.

The accompanying sketch map will show the route taken.

As we go we shall naturally try to set down all of interest and value that we see or hear, but in fortunate addition we have in our ranks a clerkly gentleman who is a born story-teller and who, as a remedy against the possible tedium of travel, has a store of old Lao legends and fairy-tales at his command. In order to make the best use of these, I propose to relate one at the end of each stage of our journey, and by this means I shall hope to keep you in good humour throughout. Some of these stories are fairy-tales pure and simple, but others are attempts to account, to the satisfaction of the child's mind, for such natural phenomena as the cycle of the years, the eclipse of the sun or moon, and the presence in the sky of 'The Pleiades.' They are all of a direct simplicity, and must appeal strongly to a child's imagination; one cannot indeed read them without feeling the human element which pervades them. They are probably of mixed origin, for one can see both Indian and Chinese influences at work, though perhaps the former predominates, and on the whole the moral they point is of a reasonably high standard. If one may judge the character of a people from their folk-lore—and

probably nowhere else does one get so intimate an insight into their character, for these tales are what mothers teach their children from generation to generation,—one would be inclined to say that the Lao were a simple, easily roused folk, like all primitive races, but of a happy, cheerful disposition with a strong vein of tenderness running through them. At the same time the pure fairy-tales seem to introduce a more complex side of their character, and certain other less admirable traits peep forth which appear to be inseparable from the East. But you must judge for yourselves, and in the meanwhile let us waste no time in setting out.

It was at the end of October that we left Chiangmai for Lampāng. On the way I took the opportunity of visiting Khūn Tān, high up among the hills, where the long tunnel was being pierced for the projected railway between Bangkok and Chiangmai. I had originally intended to visit one of the camps of the Bombay Burmah Company, which lay half-way between Lamphūn, the first day's stage from Chiangmai, and Khūn Tān; but the guide whom I obtained in Lamphūn was evidently not equipped for his task; at any rate, it became clear at a very early stage that he did not know the way, and when eventually I dismissed him without reward, he not only expressed surprise, but also gave vent to much abusive language.

I had therefore to forego my visit to the camp, and to continue my way along the main road to the next rest-house at Mē Thā. This actually made but little difference to the journey, for I knew that the march from Mē Thā to Khūn Tān, though rather difficult, was not long. I did not wish to expose the elephants, however, to much hill-climbing, so the next morning I sent them with the heavy baggage straight to Lampāng, and set out with mules for Khūn Tān. From Mē Thā we turned off at right angles in a northerly direction, and for several hours, in the cool of the morning, walked gaily through the jungle.

Presently we reached the edge of the forest, and came to a broad, though shallow stream; this we followed for some little while until we suddenly branched off to the right and, making our way by little trod paths through the tall jungle grass, came to the foot of a high hill. Its summit was hidden from us, but up we went without a halt, until we walked among the pines, and the undergrowth grew scarcer. Later we had a clear view all around, but still could see nothing but pine-clad hills. Up again, and we rested in a narrow gorge, to watch a small stream go tumbling down, with all the noise of a rushing torrent, very deceptive to the ear. We were now at such a height that, though



EXTRACTING TEAK LOGS BY MEANS OF A
LIGHT RAILWAY.



PACK-BULLOCKS ON THE MARCH.

the hour was near mid-day, the air was quite cold, so we braced ourselves for the final climb to the summit, about three thousand five hundred feet above the sea level. I had hoped to gain an extensive view, but my hopes were dashed, for there was nothing to be seen but hills upon hills, shutting out the landscape on every side. From this point we had to drop down more than a thousand feet on the other side of the mountain to reach our destination, and I soon discovered that climbing down a steep hill is by no means so easy as climbing up. In places one had just to slide down, and pick out a convenient tree for steadying oneself on the way. However, after a while the descent became less steep, and a sudden turn to the left brought us right on to Khũn Tân itself.

The Chief Engineer's house was built among the pines on the crest of a hill, about two thousand feet above the sea. Six hundred feet below, almost sheer down, was the cutting and the entrance to the tunnel, the yellow earth dazzling in the mid-day sun making a vivid contrast with the green foliage all around; and, as I watched, I could see the Lao coolies at work digging earth for embankments, like ants crawling on the face of a rock. On either side of the house the hills sloped gradually down from far above until, beyond the cutting, they almost met, yet did not interfere with the view of the broad plain beyond. They actually helped to focus the scene, for the eyes could not wander, and one seemed to be looking as through a telescope. On the plain could be seen the rice fields ripening to harvest, a sea of brilliant yellow-green, and beyond them again a long range of hills, stretching the length of the view, and standing sentinel over the country's treasure. A complete picture in itself; and above in the cool, clear air, one could gaze and think how little they dream of Siam, who only Bangkok know.

Later on in the day the Chief Engineer and I went down to examine the work in progress. The tunnel when completed would be thirteen hundred metres long, and boring had been started simultaneously at both ends. Two galleries were to be pierced at first, the one above the other, with some four feet of rock between them, and when both were burrowed through, the layer between would be exploded. The coolies at work were all Lao. I was told that Chinamen would be too costly as, although they are harder workers, they ask more than double the pay. Those working inside the tunnel received on the average nearly a tical a day, or about ten shillings a week. The prospect would hardly appeal to an English navvy, but then the Lao coolie can live comfortably on ten shillings a month.

After we had examined the wheel-shops, the smithy, and the other workshops ranged outside, we each took a spirit lamp and made our way to the upper tunnel. As we entered, we could see a point of light some distance ahead, which told us where the coolies were working, and soon we were picking our steps carefully along a single line of rails. The air became denser, the walls began to drip so much that there were pools of water beneath our feet, until presently we reached the scene of action. On a raised platform of stone, reminding one of the old Druid altars seen in caves in England, were six men standing, wearing nothing but loin-cloths and their bodies shining as though oiled. The three who stood in front held long iron bars with the point against the rock, while three behind, with regular monotony, swung their heavy iron hammers upon the heads of the bars. On the face of the rock nine equidistant holes were made, each the depth of the bar, three above, three in the middle, and three below. Then a charge of dynamite was laid, and the men retired some eighty yards, beyond the reach of possible splinters of rock. As soon as the explosion had ceased, forward they went again, the debris was cleared for other coolies to remove to the waggon, and the work began anew. In spite of a ventilation shaft which had been sunk some hundred and fifty metres from the opening of the tunnel, even to me the heat was uncomfortable, and to the coolies it must have been fierce, for the sweat poured from their brown shining bodies. Most of them were, I believe, opium smokers, and could do no work without the drug. They worked for four hours at a stretch and eight hours a day, and although this is not excessive, they made the conditions hard themselves, for the air at night, when the work was over and the men emerged into the open, was very cold, and apparently they provided themselves with no thick clothing.

In just five months two hundred metres of the upper tunnel had been pierced at one end, and one hundred and fifty at the other. It is rather hard to say why the one end had been able to work more rapidly than the other, but from my own experience I can say that when I visited the Lampāng end of the tunnel on the following morning, I found the heat inside, where the coolies were working, appalling; in fact, I could not stay more than a few moments without a conscious fear of fainting, and was glad to grope my way out again into the morning air. It had not been possible to sink a shaft at this end, and air had to be pumped up into the tunnel by means of piping, and a donkey engine outside. I think this must make a visible

difference in the capacity of the men for sustained labour. The construction and condition of the coolie lines and workshops were admirable, and reflected great credit on the organising capacity of the engineer in charge, working, as he was, in a remote part of Siam, far away from his lines of communication and under most abnormal conditions. For what was once a desolate hill-side, had become a model village of bamboo houses all seemingly sprung from nowhere.

Before I left the next day, I went up to take a last look over the plain. In the early morning it lay half shrouded in mist, and imps of fleecy clouds, racing, in their discourteous fashion, across the path of the newly-risen, indignant sun, made the shadows play upon the fields of standing rice.

This tunnel has, of course, been completed for some time now, and the permanent way of the northern line runs through it to Chiengmai. It may certainly be regarded as a remarkable engineering achievement.

On the occasion of a much later visit to Khūn Tăn in 1920, my wife and I set out very early one morning and climbed to the top of Doi Ngā Chāng (Mount Elephant-Tusk), which lies behind Khūn Tăn and rises to a height of about 4800 feet. The jungle on its slopes varies—part of it is evergreen, and part of it is scrub; and near the top we found both oak and pine. The railway authorities had cut a graded track up the mountain-side and had built a crow's nest on the top, from which on a clear day, in the early rains, one can see both Chiengmai and Lampāng. We were not so fortunate as there was a thick haze over the land, and one could only see the rivers shining like silver threads through it.

One incident on our upward journey served to remind us why the tiger is called the 'Lord of the Jungle.' We saw practically no animal life all day, except in the early morning hordes of chattering monkeys, who filled the air with their babel of noise. Suddenly, far down below me in the ravine, I heard a sound, not a roar, nor a bark, but, as far as I can describe it, like a compressed snarl. Its effect was instantaneous and startling. In a flash the troops of monkeys were still, and there was not a sound in the whole forest except the dew falling on the leaves. After a few minutes' interval the sound was repeated once more, and the deep, dead silence which followed the second command made one realise the power the tiger wields over other forms of jungle life. The old Lao guide who was with me confirmed this out of his own wide experience, and also told me a curious fact about the tiger, which others may corroborate or

not; that, when it so wishes, it can imitate faithfully the call of a mother-deer to its young, and occasionally does so at dusk, lying crouched by the side of some forest pool. In this way it will not infrequently catch some young hind or doe that has strayed too far from its mother's side.

After leaving Khũn Tăn on the occasion of my original visit, we lost our path for the greater part of a day, and it was not until late in the afternoon that we eventually struck it again and arrived at the rest-house at Băn Mưang. There we spent the night, and the following day, taking a short cut, came on to the main road just below Hăng Săt, and soon arrived in sight of the outskirts of Lampăng on the banks of the Mê Wăng.

Lampăng (or Lăkôn, as it is popularly called) is a fairly large and thriving city of between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, situated on both banks of the Mê Wăng, a tributary of the Mê Ping.

On the East bank are found the Palace of the Chief, the Administration Offices, the Gaol, the Court-house, in fact, all the Government buildings; and further down, at the far end of the main market, the compounds of the Anglo-Siam Corporation and the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, opposite which latter is the Sports Club and Polo ground.

On the West bank are the compounds of the British Vice-Consulate, the Borneo Company and Messrs. L. T. Leonowens, while a long way down the river, opposite the Sports Club and on the road to Chiangmai, may be seen the various houses and buildings belonging to the American Presbyterian Mission.

The Railway Station is about two miles from the town in a southerly direction, and is connected by a good road (except in the rains), bordered with a quickly-growing avenue of trees and padi-fields on either side, so that there is plenty of room for expansion. The Department of Highways has also erected a fine concrete bridge over the Mê Wăng in the centre of the city, thus replacing in timely fashion the old wooden bridge which was falling to decay.

Lampăng also possesses a hill, or mountlet, which forms a picturesque setting to the Sports Club, and there is an admirable view of the north-eastern hills from the market if one turns and looks up the river; but it cannot be said that Lampăng compares in any way with Chiangmai for natural beauty, or with Năn either for that matter. In spite of its red-brick walls and its ancient history, it does not wear the same mantle of venerable antiquity as does Chiangmai. It has no moat, or lotus ponds, and the hill does not dominate Lampăng, as Doi Sũthép dominates



RICE SEEDLINGS JUST TRANSPLANTED FROM THE NURSERY IN
FIELDS UNDER WATER.



JAM OF TEAK LOGS IN THE RIVER MÊ WẮNG BELOW THE NEW BRIDGE
AT LAMPĀNG

Chiangmai. There is, however, one delightful river view to be had from the precincts of the Chief's temple, which lies on the river behind the Borneo Company's compound, and I recommend no visitor to Lampāng to miss it. It will make him think more kindly of the city, after the rather ugly streets of the town itself. The last time I visited the Temple, at the end of 1923, the main Assembly Hall and the Stupa were undergoing almost complete restoration, and were in the hands of the masons. But there is a fair-sized sleeping Buddha in a side-hall to be seen, as well as a rather ornate chapel built some years ago by pious Burmans of Lampāng, and containing a fine bronze image of the Buddha in the Burmese style. The only note of incongruity was a series of small gilt angel figures (of the Raphael type) pendant from the ceiling. How easily and only too well they learn from the West!

Some ten miles away from Lampāng lies the famous Temple of Lampāng Lūang, which has already been mentioned several times in our historical survey, and the beauty of which may be gauged from the photographs shown. There is no town or even village near by. The Temple stands all by itself, and the smoothness of the grassy slopes around it, as well as the giant trees at the corners, make one think of Oxford or Cambridge, or some ancient English Abbey, and testify in themselves to its claim to antiquity.

We stayed in Lampāng for a fortnight, and then set out again for Phrê. Our company had by this time increased, and now numbered eighteen all told, a mixed party of many races, including two clerks, one Burmese and the other Siamese, the 'forijdar' or headman in charge of the elephants, an ancient Shan, steady as a rule but liable, under the influence of alcohol, to dance and caper like a young maiden; four mahouts, two of them Khămū from the French side of the Měkhōng, and two Lao, one from Phayao and the other from Kōrāt, the latter a redoubtable hunter; the head syce, a versatile Lao of wiry build, an artist in the culinary art, an adept in the barber's, and a delicate player on the strings and flute (indeed, his powers of horsemanship were the least of all his graces); with him two satellites in charge of the mules; two carriers and two messengers, staid members of an irresponsible company; a cook, who ruled with a rod of iron, and two 'boys,' the one a favourite with the fair sex but always weary, and the other, a scholar, who read aloud by night.

Unfortunately in starting we caught what we had hoped to miss, the last week of the rains; and there is nothing so depressing

as travelling hour after hour through dripping forests, under leaden skies. However, there was nothing for it but to go steadily on, and after a four days' march in almost continuous rain we at length saw the town of Phrê before us. We neither met nor heard of any tigers on the road, and indeed it is strange how little animal life one sees while travelling through the northern jungles. During all my travels, except for monkeys and birds, I could count the number of jungle animals seen on the fingers of one hand. Yet the forests between Lampāng and Phrê were said to be full of tigers, and the forest men were saying that they were becoming much bolder than usual. The inroads made by the railway through the forests were driving the sambhur, the deer, and the tiger's more legitimate prey further and further afield, and his highness was now hard pressed to find his daily meal. So he was lurking till dusk on the fringe of the rice-field, or behind some sheltering log in the stream, ready to pounce upon the unwary husbandman, lagging behind his fellows, or on the fat old buffalo, which had known domestic peace too long to be able to offer any resistance worthy of the name.

On the day that we arrived in Phrê the rain held off during most of the morning, but as we were preparing to cross the river Mê Yom, which skirts the town, a storm broke over our heads. The torrential rain soon ceased, but its place was taken by a fine drizzle, which was accompanied by an alarming change of temperature; in two hours the thermometer dropped from 83 to 63 degrees F., and during three whole days never rose above that point. At the crossing of the Mê Yom the bank on the further side is thirty feet high, but on the city side there is a shelving beach of sand leading up into a lane. On the sand was lying a log of wood, and there one evening I sat and watched the scene around me. The work for the day was done and everyone, man and beast, was returning to his home. To either side in front of me were rows of buffaloes, some black, some pink, drinking deep of water and content as they lay in the shallows with their snouts and the ridges of their backs just showing above the water. Others had finished their bath and were being driven past me city-wards by small children, whose parents quietly followed behind, each one armed with a branch or two cut for the evening fire. As the buffaloes lumbered up the slope, a bullock-cart with its team came dashing down it past them, raising the dust and almost brushing their flanks. But though they turned their heads, there was no expression on their faces, not even surprise—just a stupid, vacuous stare.



DECORATED MONSTER (NĀGA), 35 FEET HIGH, ON SLOPE OF GROUND
OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE OF CHA-HENG, NĀN (*one of a pair.*)



VIEW OF THE FAMOUS TEMPLE AT LAMPĀNG LUANG.

Just beside me was an ancient dame placidly casting her net for fish—she was using the big square net which looks like an umbrella turned inside out, and while I watched she did not seem to gather in very much. Yet she did not seem any less content on that account. Suddenly I heard the well-known 'clock-clock' of an elephant bell, and, looking across the river, I saw a large female descending the steep cutting in the bank with slow and dignified steps, to take its evening bath. As it entered the water, all the buffaloes nudged one another and shifted out of the way, like children do in school with whispers and shuffling when some adult comes among them. The elephant paid no heed, but sank gracefully down into the water and squirted long draughts of water into its mouth. Then the mahout left its neck and, standing on its broad back, proceeded to bale the water over it, scrubbing the back with feet and hands. Ears and forehead, eyes and neck, all were truly washed, before the gentle monster slowly rose and stood in the water black and glistening. With measured steps it left the river—one could almost imagine it bowing to right and left as it did so—passed up the steep incline and so out of sight. The buffaloes breathed again, and puffed and snorted to their hearts' content.

Presently a party came across in the ferry-boat, a very old woman, with two small boys and a girl, and as soon as the boat was beached and they were free, off went the boys' clothes and into the river they dashed. The old lady and the girl watched them for sometime as if trying to make up their minds to take the plunge; at last they gingerly entered the water for a few yards and then, suddenly whisking their 'sins,' or skirts, above their heads, sank below the surface. The light faded and the stars came out; and I walked quietly home, wondering at the simple, contented life these gentle folk lead, and whether we could ever go back to it again.

Like most of the cities in the North of Siam, Phrê is a mixture of town and country, and from its main street to the open fields is only a short walk. As you approach the city from Lampāng you are brought to a stand by the river Mê Yom with its banks thirty feet high. You can cross in the ferry, but the ponies must swim, and the elephants make a detour to find the shallows. Having crossed, you follow a narrow lane, leaving the compound of the Bombay Burmah on your left and the Forest Office on your right, until you reach the opening in the city-wall known as the Prātū Mān (the Burmese Gate). This you pass through and then, if you take the road to the right, ten minutes will bring you to the cross-roads in the centre of the city. If you keep

straight on, you will pass the Governor's house and the prison, and find the road to Nān. The road to the left passes by the 'Khao Sānām' (Offices of the Administration), while that to the right takes you through the market, under the Prātū Chai (The Gate of Victory) and past the gendarmerie station, until a further turning to the right brings you to the motor-road, which leads to the railway station at Dén Chai. Just off the market street, on the right-hand side before you reach the Gate of Victory, is U Pin's, the general store. U Pin is a Chinaman, and has a billiard table, which is much in demand.¹

At the corner of the cross-roads, as you turn down to the market, there stands an ancient temple within its leafy garden, and in the 'Sālā,' which adjoins the temple, a large image of the Buddha had been set up. It was made in the form known as 'Kātsāmātpet,' that is, with both soles of the feet uppermost, and was black with age; and it seemed strange that so fine an image had not been placed within the temple itself. But there is a story attaching to this image of the Buddha which shows the trend of the people's thoughts. Some years ago it was brought down from Chieng-Sên, and was hailed by the people as the possible saviour of their crops, for no rain had fallen for many months, and the ploughing season was long overdue. So great honour was done to the image; it was carried through the streets in procession and many offerings were made before it. Still no rain fell, until at last the people grew weary and their pleasure gave way to anger—until, indeed, they began to murmur that it was this strange image that held off the rain. So they cast it on one side, and now it stands deserted and unhonoured in the 'Sālā' of the temple.

One evening, while wandering through the city, I was struck by a notice in Siamese outside a temple wall which read 'Wāt Phyā Rūang Phrā Sāmūt,' and underneath, also in Siamese, 'Here is a School for teaching Siamese.' The Siamese language is now taught in every temple school in the North, but the notice is not as a rule displayed in such a quaint fashion, so I passed through the broken wall and round the temple buildings. It was a very ancient temple and much of it was in ruins, but the central hall of worship was intact, and the carving of the woodwork under the eaves on the front of the building showed signs of a vigorous craftsmanship. Inside there were no less than sixteen pillars supporting the roof, eight on either side forming aisles, and it was so dark that one could hardly see. The altar was not built jutting from the wall, as is usual in most

¹ Now, alas, he has closed his store and gone to Chieng Rai to live.

temples, but lay back, recess-like, an arched alcove in the wall; while on the top of the pillar in front of the altar, just before it reached the roof, stood the 'Hamsa' bird, emblematic of Môn sovereignty. The steps leading into the temple, though made only of cement, shone like polished slabs of stone, and had weathered intact the storms of many centuries; and there was, indeed, a feeling of age about the place, such as I had seldom experienced elsewhere. Outside in the gardens, the 'Stupa' had recently been restored and the mythical angels and monsters at its corners painted afresh in yellow and blue and green. No doubt, in the hearts of the priests and the worshippers these dazzling forms struck a note of beauty, but I must confess that to me they seemed distressingly blatant, and to destroy in a rather ruthless manner the air of antiquity which the temple bore so well. Returning home, I passed another pagoda, at the top of which were hung a series of tiny bells with their sheets of metal hanging from them in the place of clappers; and as the evening breeze gently blew, the notes they gave forth sounded very soft and pure. Such arrangements of bells are a feature of pagodas in the North.

The different Government buildings, the temples, and the residential houses of the officials and Europeans who live in Phrê are picturesque and pleasant enough in themselves, but are scattered over too wide an area to make the city imposing. The market appeared squalid for a town in such close proximity to the railway, where business should be increasing yearly. But Phrê is far too dependent on its rice crop as yet, and its people too improvident to make any headway as a commercial town. As long as there is enough for to-day, the peasants are little troubled by thoughts of to-morrow; and yet if the rice-crop fails, even partially, as it does not infrequently, many of the population are on the verge of starvation—the majority have store of neither rice nor money. If only the people could be induced to place their savings aside in the years of plenty, safe from all insidious calls, against the lean years to come, what a difference it would make to their lives and prospects. But the Lao is an independent, careless fellow, and it is not easy to teach him the principles of thrift, or the value of work at the right time. Co-operative Credit Societies, such as are now being established in the South, should do much to assist the Northern peasants, when a suitable time arrives for their formation.

The American Presbyterian Mission has a station at Phrê, as at the other larger towns of the North, and has acquired a

large plot of ground outside the southern gate of the city, on the road to Dén Chai. It is a fine, open situation, facing a long range of hills, and at the time of my first visit the Mission were hard at work building a new hospital with dispensary attached, a school, and private houses for their different members. Their medical officer, who kindly took me round the different buildings, told me that he was shortly going to Chiengmai to establish a school of medicine for native practitioners. He already had two Lao youths in the dispensary at Phrê who were showing promise, and he intended to take them with him to Chiengmai, to form the nucleus of his class. This was some years ago now, and if he has succeeded in the interval in sending out a dozen practitioners capable of dealing with all the ordinary ailments and accidents common to the peasantry of the North, he has certainly conferred a great boon on that part of the country. I myself had to act as doctor, in my own amateur way, to the party with me; nurse them when they had malaria, and cure their legs and fingers, when sore or damaged; and I know from experience how grateful they were for the attention given.

While I was staying in Phrê, two curious incidents occurred, similar in effect if not in motive, which recalled to my mind the 'Koeppenick' affair that convulsed Germany some years ago.

In the one case a young Siamese came north from Bangkok to Utaradit, a garrison station just below Phrê, and announced himself as an official of the Ministry of the Interior travelling on a tour of inspection; he was formally received and later passed on to Phrê. There his progress came to an abrupt end, for, driving one day through the streets with some of the local officials, he was suddenly hailed by a passer-by with the friendly call of 'Ai Chan, what are you doing here?' Thereupon the man admitted himself to be an impostor and the Governor placed him in prison. It was discovered later that he was the son of a wealthy Chinaman in Bangkok by a Siamese wife, who had come to Utaradit on business and being, for some reason, mistaken for an official expected, promptly assumed the rôle. Colour was added to the deception by the fact that he flung his money freely to all and gained nothing by the fraud. There was more than a suspicion that the young man was not quite sane.

The second case was more serious, and the culprit certainly had cause to regret his pleasantry at the expense of the Phrê officials. It seems that a gentleman presented himself as an official of the Royal Household, sent on a special mission to examine the administration of Phrê. By some means he had



EXTRACTING TEAK LOGS BY MEANS OF ELEPHANTS.



ELEPHANT ROLLING A TEAK LOG INTO A STREAM WITH TRUNK AND TUSKS.

obtained a badge of rank and forged credentials, and his bearing was such that no doubts were entertained regarding him. He stayed in Phrê for some considerable time, during which time he made himself popular, obtained goods on credit and borrowed money wherever he could. But, unfortunately for him, he outstayed his welcome—the chief safeguard a community has against such rogues. By chance a high official passed through Phrê; a name was mentioned, enquiries were made, and finally the 'Officer of the Royal Household' stood revealed as plain Nai Sūk. I believe he received a very severe sentence.

It is rather remarkable that two such cases should follow one another in quick succession, and that both should take place in the same Siamese provincial town, for the idea of such imposture is new to Siam. I mention these two cases particularly because I have heard it suggested with some reason that the charge of instilling such ideas must be laid at the door of the cinematograph.

There are now many halls in Bangkok, where nightly are shown diverting exploits on the part of *fărăng*,¹ which may well inspire impressionable Siamese youths with a desire to imitate them. There is something wrong with the control of cinematograph enterprises, which permits these ridiculous and melodramatic films to find their way to the East, where they are viewed by thousands of uneducated Eastern folk. There is not the slightest doubt that, if these films do harm to the youth of the West, they are a hundred-fold more harmful in the East, not only from an educational point of view, but also to the prestige of Europeans. To see a young girl pursued by some drunken white man; or the heroine in the clutches of a Chinese secret society; in fact, the general eulogy of immorality and crime that is perpetually being displayed in the East, literally makes the blood boil, and one longs for the power to prohibit such films entirely.

Another subject, evidently not appreciated in the West, is that of elephant stealing. Most of us remember that time-honoured joke in 'Punch' about elephant-stealing in Siam, and the activity of the local pick-pockets. It has disappeared now, as elephant stealing has gone out of fashion, but I wonder whether it was ever realised how easy elephant stealing used to be, and how many animals were actually stolen annually.

Nowadays elephants are branded with an acid paste, the marks of which cannot be obliterated, and elephant-stealing has in consequence become a trade of the past, since the thief cannot dispose of the property; but under the old conditions, when

¹ Foreigners.

elephants were merely branded with hot irons, the marks of which could be removed, the procedure was simple, and the thief did not even require a pocket in which to hide his stolen property. Let me give an example. Elephants, when used as 'travellers' or transport animals, cannot be kept in a compound for any length of time, on account of the difficulty of finding sufficient food for them, but must be sent out into the forest under the care of their mahouts, to fend for themselves. Each evening the mahouts, who make a camp somewhere near, must go out into the forest and bring them into camp. What could be easier than for some expert thief and rider, who was watching his opportunity, to loose the hobbles of one of the elephants quietly browsing among the branches, to jump on to its back, remove its bell, and drive it twenty miles before its mahout came to look for it. Even then the mahout would probably think that it had lost its bell through some accident, or had wandered further than usual; and before he actually became convinced of the fact that it had been stolen, the animal would be fifty miles away, on the road to Burma. It would mean another day's journey for the mahout to come into the station and report the loss, and even then what could be done? The Burma authorities could be requested by telegraph to keep a watch for an elephant bearing such and such a mark, but by the time any search could be made, the animal would have lost its mark and been sold; in fact—to its owner irretrievably lost. It must not be forgotten that towns, even villages, are few and far between, and that the jungle is very thick—also that telegraph lines and means of communication are not so universal as in Europe.

Now that I have freed myself from the burden of these two charges against the West, for which you must forgive me, my mind is easier; and before we part company in this chapter let us call in our story-teller and see if he cannot turn our thoughts into more harmonious channels. He has promised to tell us the story of The Cycle of Twelve Years, but before he begins it will be necessary to give you some idea of how time is calculated in this part of the world.

In reckoning the years in Siam, as I have mentioned before in a footnote, many different eras have been in vogue officially during the past thousand years, such as the Mahā Sākārāt, or Great Era, which was brought from India by the Brahmins; the Chūla Sākārāt, or Little Era, which is the old Burmese Civil Era; the Buddhist Era (dating from the Pari-Nirvana of Gautama), and the Bangkok Era, of recent date, reckoned from the founding of Bangkok as the capital of Siam in 1782,

but only introduced in 1889. This last-named has now been displaced once more by the Buddhist Era.

But through all these years, the peasant and country-folk, both north and south, have not troubled their heads about the dates of years. They have kept to the 'cycle of life,' which is believed to have originated in China, and which revolves every twelve years; while the months are numbered by lunar reckoning, and the years begin on the first day of the waxing moon of the first month, usually at the end of October or the beginning of November.

Now each of the twelve years in the cycle of life bears the name of some animal, and all who are born in any one particular year take the animal whose name it bears under their special protection, and must never do that animal any harm throughout their lives.

The names of the animals, among the Siamese, are as follows, in their proper order:

Rat, ox, tiger, rabbit (hare), dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, cock, dog, and pig.

The Lao do not have the 'pig,' but the 'elephant' instead; and the names in the vernacular are different from the Siamese, closely resembling the Chinese.

So, you see, it is no use asking a peasant how old he is. He cannot tell you in years. But if you ask him when he was born, if he is intelligent, he will answer, 'on the fifth day of the waning moon in the fourth month of the year of the Dragon,' and if you have a comparative calendar ready you can tell exactly how old the man is. Your only difficulty will be in guessing whether he is 24, 36, or 48, and there should be but little uncertainty about this.

This method of reckoning ages is, from the point of view of a Court of Law, for instance, much more satisfactory than that of asking a witness how old he is. For a good many peasants know on which day they were born, or if that fails, they know at least the name of the animal that they must not harm, and if the calendar is at hand, there is almost absolute certainty of being correct as to the year. At times Europeans, especially ladies, cannot always remember the year of their birth.

One must confess that the list of the animals seems to have been drawn up rather arbitrarily, almost unfairly. It is easy enough to remember that you must not harm a horse or a monkey, but think of the temptation if a snake were about to bite you, or a dragon to devour you, or a tiger to pounce upon you with

flashing eyes. These are times, I suppose, when principles are allowed to be sunk, especially if no one is looking on.

You may ask then, how did this cycle of twelve years obtain the names it bears? This is how it happened.

THE STORY OF THE TWELVE YEARS

Once upon a time there lived on earth a fairy King and Queen, who had twelve children, all of them girls.

When the first child was born, the fairy King made a picture of a rat for his daughter to play with, and called her 'the Protector of the Rat.' The year of her birth he named 'Pi Chai,'¹ and presently the picture of the rat came to life.

When the second was born, the King made a picture of an ox and gave it to the child, saying that she was now 'the Protector of the Ox'—and presently the picture of the ox came to life. And so on until he had made all his daughters guardians of certain animals, and named the years after them.

In the course of time the fairy King decided to leave this earth, and so he flew aloft, making straight for Heaven. But a violent wind arose and struck him, so that his neck was severed from his body, and he fell to earth again in the country of the 'white-bellied' Lao.² When the people saw what had happened, they sent word throughout the land that a head had fallen to earth without a body, and that no one could identify it. From all parts of the country the people flocked to see the head, but no one could recognise it until at last the twelve maidens came and looked at it. At once they identified the head as belonging to their father. So they gathered it up reverently and bore it home with them, and the twelve daughters agreed among themselves that they should each take it in turn to guard the head for a year.

The head itself is called 'Sǎngkǎn,'³ and the wife, who was Queen, is called 'Old Mother Sǎngkǎn.'

And from that time onwards, whenever the year was up and the guardianship of the head was transferred from one daughter to another, the whole of mankind throughout the world called out 'Sǎngkǎn rông' and changed their year.

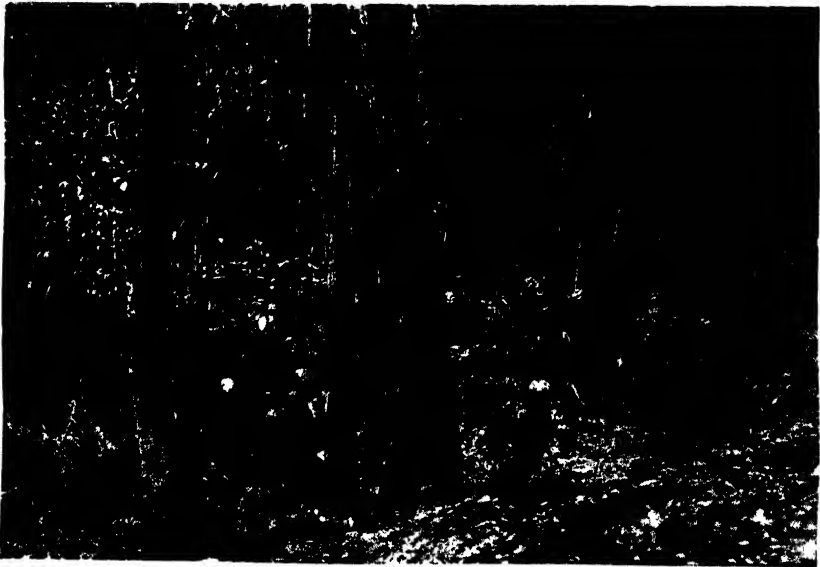
¹ Siamese (Pi Chuat).

² Those who inhabit the east bank of the Mêkhông (non-tattooed).

³ The word 'Sǎngkǎn' in Siamese means 'matter, body, whatever arises from a cause.'



TEAK LOGS IN A JUNGLE STREAM WAITING FOR A RISE (*taken during the hot season.*)



KHĀMŪ FORESTERS GIRDLING (I.E. RINGING WITH AXE) TEAK TREES.

CHAPTER IX

From Phrê to Năn

THE south-west monsoon had ceased to blow, and the morning broke clear and fresh as we set off down the road to Năn. Soon after starting a slight commotion was caused by one of the elephants, which took fright at the sight of a pony (as they often will) and dashed into the bushes scattering its load as it went. But the mahout at once brought his ankus to work, and order was soon restored.

Except for crossing the Mê Kamī stream on two occasions, the first day's stage was unvaried and long, and we were glad to reach the 'Sālā' at Nōng Kwāng, where we put up for the night. Nōng Kwāng is a dull village, with little of interest, but in the evening I met a member of the Danish East Asiatic Company, in charge of their teak forests in this district, who entertained me after the kindly manner of his countrymen. In England the two peoples do not see much of one another, but out here in Siam, where there are many Danes, the latter mix on very friendly terms with the British.

From Nōng Kwāng to the 'Sālā' at Nā Tăn, our next resting-place, was also a long day's march. For most of the way the road led us through evergreen forest; now up a rugged hill, and now dipping again to cross the Mê Kamī, which crept in and out of our path with innumerable windings. I believe that, before we reached Nā Tăn, we had crossed the stream more than fifty times, and even then we had not yet left it behind, but would have to cross it some twenty times more on the following day.

As you approach the end of the day's march, if you stop at one of the crossings of the Mê Kamī, you will hear the sound of water falling. Mark the spot, and later on in the evening, when you are rested, retrace your steps. It is not far; if I remember rightly, it is only the fifth crossing from the rest-house, perhaps a quarter of an hour's walk, and you cannot mistake the noise made by the water's fall. When you reach the crossing, turn to the right and wade up the stream. Suddenly, when you have gone a hundred yards, you will see on your left a small cascade—so small and yet so noisy. But that small cascade is like the market-man crying his wares—he is not trying to draw attention to himself, but rather to the quality of

the goods he has to offer. So just clamber up the rocks over the cascade, and, wading through the water, follow the series of eddies and falls for the space of a quarter of a mile, and you will find yourself in the middle of fairyland. The water is steel blue, everywhere are island dots covered with ferns; and logs fallen across the water, strewn with moss and lichen, add to the eerie beauty of the scene. The stream is nowhere more than ten yards across and each side is lined with impenetrable grass and rows of tall trees, whose branches meet overhead. Not a sound to be heard but the falling of water.

We had arrived in camp too late to go to the head of the falls, where there is a first descent of some sixty feet, but we went as far as the fading light would permit, until the water pools became too deep to wade through. In every case the actual fall of water is small, but there is always enough force to create a fringe of white foam; and I sat on a fallen tree and watched the crystal-clear water as it flowed quietly along the smooth rock, went tumbling down another fall, and then was split by boulders into innumerable rivulets, to meet again lower down as it rolled over the edge of the next descent. Every corner one turned, a different vista, a different shade in the colour of the water. It might be even more enchanting in the early morning, with the sunlight glinting through the trees and its rays piercing to the bottom of every pool. But no, I think the quiet of evening is the time to see it, when the water is cold steel blue and all the sounds of the jungle are quiet. I have named it 'The Enchanted Glen,' for I know the fairies live there; and I think that, if you crept by moonlight into its depths, you might see such a dance of elves and gnomes as would set your heart a'thrill.

The following morning the elephants were longer than usual at their bath, and we left the camp rather late, but still we arrived at the 'Sālā' at Pang Min well before noon after a pleasant ride through the forest. The old rest-house had been pulled down, and the new one, which the 'Nai Amphur'¹ was just completing when we arrived, stands by itself in a jungle-clearing, with no village near at hand. The 'Nai Amphur' proved companionable, and the 'Sālā,' though small, was built on piles of solid planks with a verandah over the porch. He told us that the district was infested by tigers, and that, although he had lost no ponies or men since he had been staying there, he had heard them roaring every night on the hills around. I began to accept these tiger stories, not altogether in the light of scepticism, but rather as a necessary

¹ District officer

adjunct to travel. As for their roaring, I slept far too well to be awakened by it.

We left the 'Sālā' at Pang Min at dawn and, while a heavy mist still hung over the earth, went on our way through the forest. On every leaf the dew lay thick, but gradually the mists rolled away and the sun came out, and the flowers of the forest lifted their heads once more to greet us as we passed. Nowhere was the jungle thick; in fact, we might almost have been in the Surrey woods, had it not been for the tropical foliage and the growing heat. Suddenly, without warning, we emerged from the forest and saw, rolling before us, a plain of golden rice faintly stirred by the breeze. At the end we could see a village with its clumps of tall palms, and beyond it, the hills shimmering in the haze. Down we went through the waving fields until at length we entered the village of Wiang Sā, some eighteen miles from Nān, and reined up at the rest-house, set in a compound of tall trees.

The village of Wiang Sā is a model for all Siam. At right angles to the road by which we entered lay the main street. It was about fifteen yards wide and lined on either side by a beautiful avenue of tamarind trees. Just outside the rest-house was a gate to prevent cattle from straying, and passing through this, we saw well-built wooden houses enclosed within their own fences. On the left was the 'Nai Amphur's' office; on the right, the gendarmerie station, painted white and with a neat garden, containing rows of crotons, clusters of rose-bushes, and well-trimmed lawns; further on, a store and a row of shops, all scrupulously clean and wearing a general air of prosperity. Near the rest-house was the village well, and in the evening, as in olden times, the maidens came in groups to draw the water for the house. As I watched them (which I could not help), I was struck by their comeliness, their well-developed figures, their splendid bearing and their bountiful hair. You might indeed search throughout Siam for finer specimens of womanhood. Their 'sin', too, were of a different kind from those that I had hitherto seen, much brighter and with more tasteful blending of colour. They were in fact typical Nān 'sin,' which have the reputation of being the most beautiful in Siam. Some hundred yards away flowed the tributary of the Nān river on which the village was situated—picturesque enough, but very narrow. Buffaloes were peacefully wallowing in the water, just showing their noses and uttering long grunts of contentment. I could espy a stork on the further bank standing quite still, perhaps watching for fish; but I could not keep away from the

village green, and so returned to wander up and down till dusk. In the evening I sat and watched the stars, to the music of a flute and a Lao banjo, played by two of the syces, and to the 'clock, clock' of the bells tied round the elephants' necks. The latter were hobbled and tied up in front of the rest-house compound, munching away at their evening meal of banana stems and coconut branches. I remember that evening well; a cool wind was blowing, and later the crescent moon rose, throwing the scene and the great bulk of the elephants into bold relief.

Reluctantly we left Wiang Sā at dawn the next day and turned our steps towards the city of Nān. As we went through the woods, we roused several brilliant jungle-fowl which ran helter-skelter into the thickets at our approach; their plumage is beautiful, gold and red and green. But at ten o'clock we left the woods behind, so we mounted our ponies and rode as hard as we could between acres of shadeless rice fields. An hour's hard riding brought us to the city-wall. Through this we passed and, turning sharply to the right, made a quarter circuit inside the wall. Then, coming out again, we crossed a long wooden bridge over a deep dry channel and, turning once more to the left, entered the lane leading to our rest-house. This we found pleasantly situated near the river's bank, but in a wilderness of weeds and tall grass.

The caretaker said that this had been caused by high floods some three months previously, which placed the compound entirely under water; and I heard on all sides that that season's floods had been abnormal, and that practically every compound on the river's bank was flooded during several days. It seemed difficult to credit, for the banks are twenty-five feet high, and at the time of my visit, December, there was only three or four feet of water in the river. Yet I learnt that three months before, at Bān Tāi, in the outskirts of the city on the river, a little further south, where the Shan British subjects have a settlement of shops, the water not only covered their garden plots, but part of their houses as well to a height of fifteen feet, and the inhabitants had to retire, together with their worldly goods, to attics specially built in the roof.

Nān is very beautiful—not only the city itself, but the country all around. Wherever the eye wanders, it sees nothing but woodland and high hills, and nearer the city, in the cold season of the year, waving fields of golden rice. The city wall is high and built of red brick, and, being newer, is in a better state of preservation than those of the other towns in the north. The enclosed space is large, but the population is small and scattered,



ELEPHANT BEING LOADED WITH A HOWDAIL.



A TYPICAL JUNGLE STREAM.

and the place has that peaceful air of a sleepy old provincial town at home. For some years now the forest areas round it have been closed, so that none of the teak companies have branches in Nān, and what trade exists is not important. The streets within the walls are in good order, many planted with avenues of full-grown tamarinds, but, except to the south, there are no roads leading out of the city. To the north lies a forest path, to the west many miles of ricefields, while to the east is the river, and across that, ricefields again.

As in the other towns of the north, the population of Nān is a motley one; Lao naturally form the majority, but Khāmū Shan, Burmese, and Toungsū (from Upper Burma), all have their settlements in the city. At the north end of the town are the barracks, where is quartered a moderately strong garrison. They are situated in well-wooded fields some distance from the actual market, so that the military is not evident to any great degree, as one passes through the streets.

The only European element in the city is American—now that the French Consulate has been removed to Chiangmai—for the Presbyterian Mission has a station in Nān, as elsewhere, with a school and dispensary where the people can obtain an education and medicine respectively at the cheapest possible rates.

Most of the principal residents live upon the river's bank, but all the public buildings are situated within the city walls, and with these considerable improvements had been recently made. The gendarmerie station was admirable, built after the fashion peculiar to Siam, one long storey on stout piles, with rooms at either end, and the middle space open except at the back, the whole painted white above and black below, and enclosed within a trim garden plot. These stations are all kept scrupulously clean, and a debt of gratitude is due to the Danish instructors who have brought their ideas of order and simplicity to Siam with such good results.

On the south side of the town, just inside the city, a wide area of ground had been enclosed within four high and white square walls, and in this a new and roomy prison has now been built. It contains the Head Gaoler's house at the gateway, and the main building in the centre of the ground, both of brick and cement; in addition, a bath-house, eating hall, stables, lavatories, and kitchens are also included, all of brick and cement. It was said that many of the peasants were already beginning to look upon it as a 'home' in the off-season.

While I was staying in Nān, I was invited one afternoon by

the Governor to witness an exhibition of Lao boxing, which proved to be of an amusing nature. The competitors came out in pairs, naked except for a small loincloth, with their family history tattooed upon their brown bodies, and some, but not all, eager for the fray. Yet the prizes to be won were not only the light from fair ladies' eyes but also honest Siamese silver, to winner and loser alike. In fighting the competitors did not use their fists, but the open palms of their hands, and the preliminaries consisted in a kind of dance, somewhat after the fashion of the conventional fencing attitude, the body sideways and both arms outstretched, the palms of the hands uppermost. The first fight came to an abrupt end. The pair went round about one another for some time seeking an opening, till presently, with a bound, one leaped in and dealt the other a resounding smack on the cheek. But the striker had unfortunately a long fringe of hair which hung over his forehead, and 'Smarting Cheek,' having lost all control of himself, promptly seized this tuft of hair and pulled and pulled until its owner howled with the pain. At this there was a great outcry from the spectators, and 'Smarting Cheek' was disqualified for having broken the rules of the game. 'Long Fringe' was then declared the winner, and, kneeling before the referee, extended his two palms above his head; the latter dropped in, one by one, six ticks, the winner prostrated himself three times, and then, jumping to his feet, disappeared among the crowd. Following on, came another two, but though they showed their supple bodies to advantage, the exhibition was more one of dancing than of boxing, since each appeared to be chary of stepping within the other's reach; and it was not until the crowd had grown tired of encouraging them that this unwilling pair eventually agreed to flick one another upon the ear. Presently another couple took their place, and so the game went on until it grew too dark to see, and the party broke up. The crowd itself was interesting to watch, and one could not help but admire the girls, who predominated, all wearing their brightest 'sin,' whether of silk or humble cotton, and with their pretty faces framed in masses of coal black hair.

One can spend an agreeable hour in buying these 'sin' from old women, well versed in the art of bargaining, who hawk them round. I caused some old ladies much amusement because I made them put the 'sin' on and turn themselves for my inspection; but round the room they went, no doubt renewing with satisfaction memories of their youth. After a long inspection I made a choice of three, the first with broad

stripes of old rose and saxe blue, and a narrow band of silver between them; the second a very sumptuous one, mainly of gold thread on a red background; and the third of blue and red bands with a good deal of silver work. Then the bargaining began, and while I pointed out the many defects in each, the owners stated their lowest price, with the fixed intention of accepting half, if compelled to do so. At last we were agreed, and the old ladies departed with many shrill protestations against the hardness of my heart. These people afford a very interesting study of human nature. They are simple and plain-spoken like all peasants; childish in their pleasures, but with an uncanny sharpness in their business dealings, particularly the old women. These latter have indeed many of the traits seen among their like in the west, an inordinate love of gambling and very long tongues. They have, too, the miser's love of money, amounting to a passion, and will wrangle for hours at a time over the price of a bundle of cigarettes.

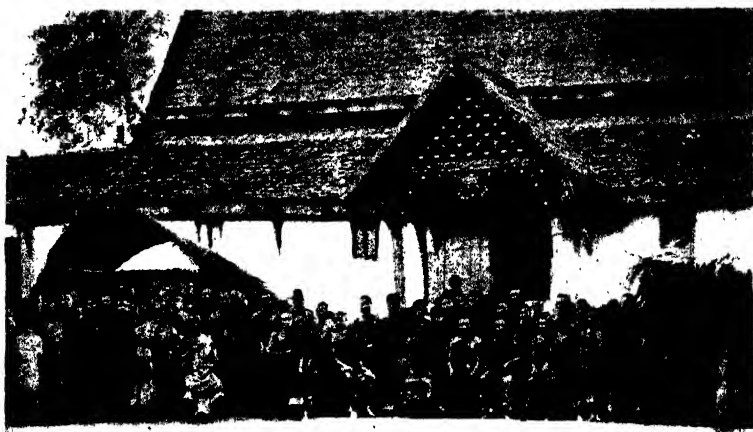
It was pleasant to sit on the bank of the Nān river in the cool of a December evening, and to watch the throngs of men and women as they came to take their daily bathe; I do not need to draw upon my imagination to paint you a beautiful scene.

To the west the river took a wide bend, and above the jutting bank could be seen the green of a forest, topped by a range of graceful hills. The sun was gradually setting and the gently rippling water was very clear and bright. In a few moments the full moon would rise in all its beauty, but before it showed above the trees, the high sandy banks of the river were clothed in robes of gold. As I looked across, the view was closed by rows of tall bamboos and palms, in front of which, fringing the opposite shore, were gardens of green tobacco. Even as I looked the sun had disappeared and a radiant moon, rising clear above the topmost tree, was rapidly mounting the sky. If I turned to the west, the sky and water were a haze of purple and gold; if to the east, the sky was of a wonderful blue, and the shadows of the trees made the water a lucent green. It seemed as if the moon were trying to pierce to the uttermost depths of the water, such a brilliance of light did it cast along the surface. On the opposite bank I saw the husbandmen and women returning home from their work in the rice-fields—it was harvest time—and to meet them flew a row of long shallow dug-outs, steered by small and impish 'deks.¹ It was a study in sculpture to see the long sweeps of their poles and the supple movements of their bodies, as they stood silhouetted clear

¹ 'Dek,' a small child.

against the sky. With merry quips to their rival oarsmen, they pulled their fares to the bank on which I was sitting, and counted their money with a smile. It soon grew dusk, and the last boat emptied its human contents on to the shore. The cries of the steersmen ceased, and the boats were moored to their stakes. All was quiet and it was time to go in—although I was loth to leave, for the moon was holding supreme sway, of a wondrous size and brilliance. Yet the dews were heavy and the ants courageous, so I had perforce to go. As I rose, I could just see on the other shore the shadowy forms of cattle returning home, and hear the gentle tinkling of their bells.

One evening my wandering footsteps took me to Wat Sôn Tăn, a picturesque temple with a number of old ruined pagodas clustering round it, lying to the west of the city and just within its walls. As I entered the precincts of the temple, I was surprised to see grouped around the main building rows of small roofed chambers, not more than five feet square, and made entirely of leaves and osiers; but I soon learnt that these had been built for the priestly fast of Pāliwāt. This period of fasting is apparently not observed simultaneously throughout the north of Siam, for in Chiengmai and Lampāng it takes place in January, whereas in Nān and Chieng Rai it is held in December, the third month of the Lao year. It always occurs during the waxing of the moon, and for ten days the priests of the temple live within their leafy huts and keep vigil for the sins of men. From eleven at night till four in the morning they may rest, but at that hour they must rise and offer up morning prayers at the pagodas round the temple; which duty done, they retire to their cells and 'tell their beads' till nine. At nine they come out once more and take their places in line within a 'run' prepared for them, each holding forth his bowl to receive the daily offerings of rice, flowers and candles brought by the townsfolk to make merit for their sins. Then the priests take their one daily meal of rice, and thereafter, having given thanks, they must sit throughout the whole of the day within their chamber walls and 'tell their beads' until the night comes and they may take their rest once more. This task they must do through ten long days, when the fast is at an end and the feast begins. At the time of my visit the fast had been some eight days in progress, and the temple and its gardens were already being festooned in preparation for the coming festival. The courts were thronged with novices and small children hardly able to restrain their feelings, in much the same way as our children look forward to Christmas with the presents and the joyous gatherings it brings.



ABBOT, PRIESTS AND NOVICES OUTSIDE A TEMPLE AT NĀN.



LEAFY SHELTERS OUTSIDE A TEMPLE AT NĀN USED BY PRIESTS
DURING THE FAST OF PĀLIWĀT.

On the eleventh day the worshippers will congregate in the outer courts and a service will be held. At the close the priest will bless the people and they may then all depart their several ways. Much visiting and tea-drinking will follow, and the old ladies will dilate upon the levity and precocity of the youth of to-day with feelings tinged with envy. One cannot help noticing, here as elsewhere, how the thoughts of age turn towards the comforts of religion—for in front of many of the cells I saw extreme age in the company of extreme youth reverently laying candles and flowers and seeking intercession from the priest within. Yet of young or middle-aged persons there were but few—perhaps there will be more when the festival begins, and when all the lanterns are lit at night.

There is an amusing legend—or it may be truth—surrounding the building of one of the temples in Năn, Wăt Chăng Khăm, which lies just outside the Prince's palace to the south-east. More than a century ago the city was in a state of siege at the hands of the Burmese, and, as occurred sometimes during these wars, both sides were anxious to determine the issue by some other means than actual physical combat. Accordingly, a compact was entered into, that whichever side should be the first to erect and complete a pagoda of a certain height, that side should be hailed the victor. The Burmese, with honest zeal, began to build a pagoda of brick and stone; but the Lao, with the aid of an elephant and working day and night, soon raised a mound of sand to the height required, and then cheerfully planted on the top an umbrella. The Burmese imagined that the Lao had completed their pagoda, and, accepting their defeat in the spirit of true sportsmanship, at once raised the siege!

Nearly all the temples of Năn, and there are many, are beautifully decorated in colour and kept in good repair, more so than in any other northern town, and I was told that the aged Prince of Năn took especial care that they should be so.

The Prince, who died some years ago, was eighty-four years of age when I visited him, and was the highest feudatory chief in the kingdom, being styled 'Prăchao.' The other northern Chiefs, the Chief of Chiangmai and the Chief of Lampāng, are styled 'Chao Lūang,' which, though a princely rank, is not so exalted a title as 'Prachao.' The old Prince was both blind and deaf, but he had a wonderfully striking face, as though chiselled in marble. I remember meeting him one morning while he was being carried in state to worship at his favourite temple of Wăt Chă Heng; he was sitting on his palanquin with his legs

crossed beneath him, and looked for all the world like the Buddha himself. When I called to pay my respects, he spoke with animation of names and faces of thirty years ago, and remembered well the time when his father's seat was still at Wiang Sā, before Nān became definitely incorporated in the Kingdom of Siam. Nān was at that time a very wild place, and the Prince told me that, not so many years ago, the compound in which I was then staying had been pure jungle in which tigers roamed at will, and that the peasants would not pass through it except in bands. Even now both the tiger and the panther will at times stalk their prey inside the city walls, and within recent years boys have been dragged out of temples by famished tigers and carried off. One of the mission ladies told me that she had once come face to face with a panther on the outskirts of the city, but that, while she was trying to make up her mind what to do, the panther had run away as hard as it could go. As a matter of fact, they usually will run from a human, whom for some reason or other they fear greatly, unless they are ravenous or wounded; and this applies as much to a tiger as to a panther. Even the peasants admit this, and the hill-tribes, of whom there are many in the north of Siam, scarcely fear them at all, living as they do in their midst. The mention of hill-tribes calls to mind that one day, while riding in the market place, I observed a type of folk, lolling at the door of a house, that was new to me; and I discovered that they were Yao, a tribe of people that live among the hills to the north-east of Nān. How long they have been settled in Siam is still a matter of conjecture, but there can be no doubt that they are of fairly recent Chinese origin, and are scarcely touched by the customs of the country in which they live. They were clad in dark blue trousers and tunics with red facings, women and men alike, except that the men wore skull caps with red tassels, and the women three-cornered caps. But the two sexes were so much alike that I did not realise that one of the party was a woman, until I noticed that she was carrying an infant in a bag behind, and then her peculiarly waxen face. At home in their hills their houses are large and strong, of one room only, where all the family sleep in a circle with their feet to the centre—that is, all except the elder, who has a small raised dais to himself on a screened verandah. Also they lay the split halves of bamboo poles as water-pipes to the nearest springs and supply the whole village thereby with fresh water. They are a fairly clean race, but otherwise have few of the finer instincts of civilised man. Yet their business faculties are alive, for there they were in Nān,

selling rice to the garrison and buying kerosene, matches, and other household necessities to take back to their mountain homes. The cultivation of the opium poppy—the sale of which is a Government monopoly in Siam—is said to be not altogether unknown among the Yao.

One afternoon, as soon as the sun began to tire, I set out to visit Wāt Chă Heng, the favourite temple of the old Prince, which was reported to be of great beauty. It was situated across the river at some distance from the city, and I may say at once that it did not belie its reputation. Having arrived safely at the other side of the river, I made my way through a short avenue, lined with the usual wooden houses on piles, and soon found myself on a wide open stretch of heathland. On the way I met a number of peasants returning from the rice-fields, among them three women, one old, two young, perhaps a mother and two daughters. The mother wore a plaid shawl of red and white checks, a type peculiar to Nān, but the girls were clad in tight-fitting bodices of white cotton and round their heads were wound gay-coloured cloths. On the wide stretches of turf, among the heather, were a number of 'dek,' whiling away the evening hour before bedtime. In Bangkok the children's favourite pastime, when the wind allows, is to fly their kites, but in Nān they have a game which I have not seen elsewhere. It consists in slinging from one to the other a kind of arrow, which, as it flies through the air, whistles and sings, like an aeolian harp. I picked one up, and found a short round stem of bamboo some six inches long, to which were glued seven or eight tiny reeds of varying length and size. Projecting from the end of the bamboo stem was a bundle of green stalks, and stuck into the stem, one on either side, were two feathers; attached to the stem was a string, some three feet long. A number of boys stood facing one another, and suddenly one would walk apart, whirl the 'arrow' round his head, and throw it to the other side; as I watched them playing, they must have flung their music nearly a hundred yards, and the arrow had a graceful flight as it mounted and gradually fell.

Leaving the heathland behind, I crossed a stream, and almost trod on a fat, old buffalo, wallowing in the water and mud. He gazed at me stupidly, yet blissfully, but I could not stop for buffaloes, so I climbed the stile on the other side of the stream, and came upon a beautiful scene—thousands of acres of rice, to left and to right, just ripe for the scythe. A mass of gold, here and there relieved by small green coppices which only served to throw the gold into relief. The plain must have been

from three to four miles long, and nearly a mile broad, and as I walked across, I saw that in many places reaping had already begun. The stacks which the Lao peasants make are small compared with the English haystack, and are shaped rather like a beehive; also they are unthatched. They are usually built four or five of them together ranged in a circle. As I approached the further side of the plain I could just get a glimpse of the temple on the rising ground beyond, but near at hand my attention was drawn by two of the most grotesque monsters imaginable.

Built on high walls, which ran parallel down the length of the slope, were two of the 'Nāgā,' or serpent-dragons, familiar to Siamese mythology. The guardians of the temple were each a hundred yards in length, and reared their dragon-heads nearly thirty feet into the air. Their faces and necks were painted in bright colours, blue and green and yellow; their jaws were wide open and their tongues protruded in expectation of the sacrifices, which once were theirs, but which now they look for in vain. The present guardians, which were built some twenty years ago by the late Prince of Nān, have taken the place of predecessors, which had succumbed to the ravages of time and weather. I plodded up the grassy slope and came full on Philemon and Baucis, in the shape of two magnificent banyan trees, standing sentinel—one by each of the two walls, on which the 'Nāgā' were built—while between them stood another giant banyan tree, covering perhaps half of the temple's outer wall. Among the branches one had a glimpse of a slender 'Stupa' cased in gold and rising above the temple walls. The 'Stupa' was not high, perhaps some seventy feet, and the sheath was, of course, not gold but burnished copper. It was surrounded by four white walls with tiled roofs, which formed the cloisters, and within, one on either side of the pagoda, were two small buildings, that on the right a hall of worship, and the other an open 'Sālā,' with a stone floor, on which were set up images of the Buddha and forms of animals at intervals.

As I entered I came upon a number of priests in their yellow robes standing just inside the outer door and studiously mending the spokes of a sacred umbrella. Having exchanged greetings I passed within, and walked slowly round the sanded walk, thinking of the peace of mind which life in such an atmosphere must bring. And yet more likely to most of the priests it brings nothing but inertia of mind and body, and human nature being what it is at present draws anything but profit from it. But at least that evening I could not help feeling the influence



ELEPHANTS LOADED AND ON THE MARCH.



ELEPHANT WITH ONE TUSK (*natural*).

of the stillness which reigned inside the cloisters, and wondering at the content which rested on the faces of the priests.

Outside the walls on the level stretch of turf, the temple was flanked on the one side by the priests' quarters, and on the other by a small hall. It was in the latter that I saw, among many statues of the Buddha and other forms, a strange relic of some bygone age—a small bronze figure of a horse with one head but two bodies, almost at right angles to one another. Also it had only two front legs, while each body had two hind-legs. Some of the legs were broken, but the bodies themselves were in good preservation, and each was draped with some covering, in place of a saddle. There were no stirrups. None of the priests could give me any information regarding this figure, except that it had been dug up in the neighbourhood. I think it, however, sufficiently interesting to place on record, as it is the converse of the horse with many heads seen at Angkor, in Cambodia.

By the side of this hall was a smaller one containing the gongs, which are beaten to summon worshippers to prayer. There were five or six gongs, ranging from large to small, the largest of all being made from the hollowed trunk of a tree, covered with buffalo hide at either end. As I came out of this hall, the sun was sinking fast, and the stars were taking on their usual brilliance. In the last rays of sunlight, the gold of the pagoda showed up against the dark blue sky, and the crescent moon, which was rising, threw a shaft of light through the branches of the trees. Looking down the slope, there again was gold, the gold of the waving rice fields, set against the dark outlines of the hills which, as the darkness gathered, gradually vanished from the sight.

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In our rest-house, after dinner that night, as we sat and watched the stars, the voice of the story-teller, modulated and soft, struck the right note in our ears as he began his tale of the Eclipse.

There are many tales abroad regarding the nature and cause of this phenomenon, and that most generally known is the story of three brothers, Phrā Athīt, Phrā Chăn, and Phrā Rahū, who lived together in peace and amity with their father and one another, until the latter died. On his death-bed the old man divided his property into three equal parts, and gave to each of his sons a share; but, after his death, while Phrā Rahū, the youngest of the three, was sleeping, the other two conspired together and stole their brother's patrimony. When Rahū

awoke, and found that his brothers had robbed and deserted him, he at once gave chase. But his brothers were swift and agile, and Rahū had great trouble in finding them. Even when he did discover them and in his anger attempt to strike them in the face, they usually eluded him and went on their course once more.

Here, of course, Phrā Athīt and Phrā Chăn are the Sun and Moon respectively, while Phrā Rahū is the invisible being who is for ever chasing them.

Sometimes he comes up with the one, sometimes with the other, and tries to buffet them in the face. When he succeeds there is a full eclipse; when he fails, there is only a partial one.

But the people believe that one day he may put out their light for ever and ever, and so, as soon as an eclipse becomes apparent, they come out of their houses and beat gongs to frighten him away.

This is the tale one usually hears, but there is another which is not so well-known, but which has a charm all its own; the pathos of the story makes indeed a direct appeal. Seldom in Lao folk-lore will one find such a passionate cry as must have come from the lips of the little maid as she knelt on the temple floor in prayer. Here is the tale the story-teller told us.

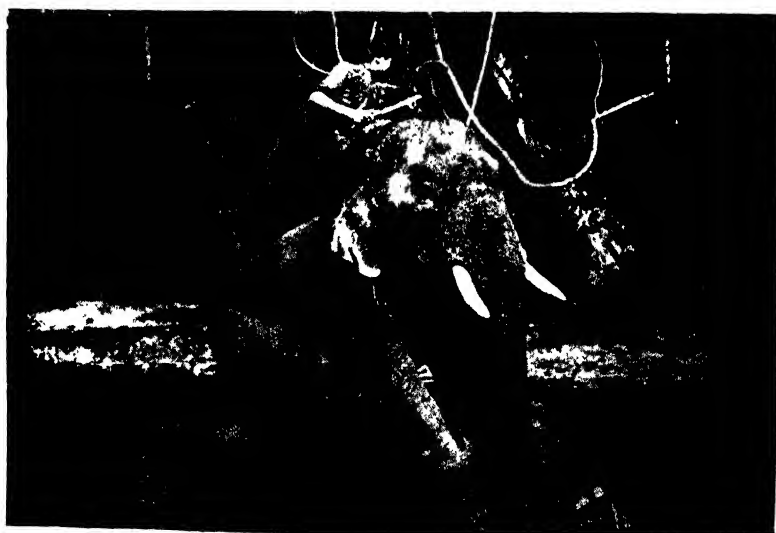
THE STORY OF THE ECLIPSE

Once upon a time, before the Sun and Moon gave light to the world, there lived upon the earth two sisters named Athīt and Chăn. They lived together with a little slave girl, who waited on them; and one day, at festival time, all three went with the rest of mankind to pray and make merit at the great temple of the land. But when they arrived, Athīt found that they had left their rice bowl, and the great wooden spoon for stirring the rice, behind.

So she sent the slave-girl back to fetch them. Presently the girl returned with the rice bowl alone, and when she gave it to Athīt and Chăn, they asked her, saying, "Where is the spoon?" Then the little slave confessed that she had forgotten to bring it. So Athīt was angry and told her to go back at once and fetch it. Off she sped once more to the house, found the spoon, and brought it safely back. But as she stood submissively before her mistress, Athīt raised the great spoon and struck her in the face before all mankind assembled there. And when Athīt had struck her, Chăn seized the spoon from her sister's hand and struck the girl again.



ELEPHANT BATHING IN A STREAM.



ELEPHANT RISING FROM HIS BATH.

Then the little slave was ashamed before all the world, and her heart burned with anger; so when she fell to prayer in the temple she prayed within herself saying, "May these two, who have brought this shame on me before the world, feel such shame as I, and when they are born a second time, may Athît become the Sun, and Chăn the Moon, visible to all the world; and may I become Rahû."

And in the course of time, when all three died, thus it came to pass. Athît and Chăn were born again on Mount Mêrû; the elder became Phră Athît the Sun, and the younger Phră Chăn the Moon, both to travel eternally at allotted intervals of time. But Rahû was born at the foot of Mount Mêrû, and although she travels eternally, too, she has no regular period fixed. In this way as all three travel round the earth, sometimes Rahû will meet the Sun, sometimes the Moon; and when she meets them she will raise her hand and strike them in the face, so that all the world may see *their* shame. If she strikes them full in the face, then there is a full eclipse, but if she partially fails in her blow, then the eclipse is only partial.

And when mankind sees Rahû strike the Sun or Moon, they fear she may put out their light for ever, so they beat gongs, and drums and instruments of all kinds to frighten her away. As they beat, Rahû gradually recedes, and the Sun or Moon goes brightly on its course once more.

The story-teller ceased, and we, the listeners, remained silent in thought. It seemed odd that such stories could still to-day retain their hold on the people, yet I could not help remembering that one night at Lampāng I was sitting at the club with friends, when we suddenly heard a loud shouting and beating of gongs, issuing from all the temples and houses round about. At first we thought it must be the usual cry of 'thief,' and took no notice. But, as it continued, we went outside the club-house, and there we saw the moon, which was full, almost totally eclipsed. As soon as the shadow began to recede from the moon, the noise ceased and all went comfortably home to bed.

I have in my possession a small black wooden powder-flask, in the shape of a bottle with a very narrow neck. Both sides of the flask are carved to represent the face of a hideous grinning ogre, with bristling moustache, bulging eyes and a row of enormous teeth. This, I am told, is a presentation of Phră Rahû. It does not coincide with the story which has just been told, but it might do so with the former one, and in any event it serves to show the fear which Phră Rahû still inspires in the hearts of men.

CHAPTER X

From Nān to Chiengkham

WE left Nān in the cold mists of an early December morning on our way to Mùang Pǒng, some six days' march from Nān, and the headquarters of the Royal Forest Department in that district. As I have already mentioned, the teak forests round Nān itself have long been closed areas, but the Bombay Burmah and the Anglo-Siam Corporations were working their concessions in the neighbourhood of Mùang Pǒng, and the chief object of my visit was to see a light railway which the Anglo-Siam Corporation were constructing into their forest of the Mē Chūn. We spent the first half of the morning in picking our way through the rice-fields, where the padi was being reaped, and we saw the harvesters threshing the sheaves, just as one might have seen them a thousand years ago. In some places the rice had already been threshed and the 'hay' stacked, and the husbandmen were sitting in a circle with the stacks all around them. In the middle of the circle there was a long pole from which were sprouting numbers of banana leaves, and at the foot of the pole were laid bunches of bananas, pappaia and other fruits, as a thank-offering for the harvest to some particular 'Phī.' Later, when the harvesting is complete, further sacrifices will be made of some of the pigs and chickens which we saw running about, and which the peasants take to the fields with them at harvest time to rear. But in many other fields the threshing was still unfinished, and on one occasion we passed as many as thirty men and women beating the sheaves on a large flat board, which lay at an angle of some 20 degrees on four upright supports and served as the threshing table. The brightness of their headgear and their varied hues—pink, blue, and yellow, deep crimson, scarlet and yellow-green—all made a vivid picture in the sunlight, as they stood there beating the sheaves in even rhythm and singing the quaint Lao melodies, which they love so well.

After a while the mists melted away, and the welcome sun shone forth once more. The stretches of rice-fields, through which we passed, were divided by small woods or coppices, and many of the landscapes we saw would need a Constable to do

them justice. One such scene remains in my memory. At our feet, and covering many hundreds of acres, were fields of harvested rice, with the golden stubble crackling in the sunlight; beyond them a line of houses and temples peeping through the trees which fringed their sides, and above the trees a range of green-clad hills of varying height, stretching the whole length of the view and bathed in the morning haze.

After leaving the rice-fields we followed a narrow track through the jungle for several hours until at length we halted in a hollow by the side of the Hué Nam Kǒng, and pitched our camp. Between Nān and Mưang Pǒng rest-houses are few and far between, for the road is little used, and we had to make use of our tents. The following morning we struck camp before it was light, and were off again as soon as we could find our elephants, who had been hobbled and left to wander during the night in search of food. The next stage, to Pāng Hin Fǒn, was not long, but was at once more arduous and more beautiful than that to Nam Kǒng. We plunged straight into the forest and began to climb, and soon we were looking down deep ravines on either side, covered with luxuriant jungle growths. The tree-ferns on the sides of the ravines were magnificent, some at least thirty feet high, with fronds fifteen feet long and a yard broad. One ravine was almost covered with them. We must have climbed nearly a thousand feet before we descended again to the Hué Nam Kǒng, whose waters were still swollen and looked invitingly cool against the grey stone of the smooth, flat rock where the deep pools lay. At noon we halted at Pāng Hin Fǒn, and, having made a clearing for the camp, pitched our tents by the bank of the stream. At night the sky and stars were wonderfully clear and bright, and the air became so cold that it was difficult to keep it from stealing through the blankets, and we were glad to rise at five and set the camp in motion. Our next objective was Mưang Sūat, and though the stage again was short, it led us for the greater part along the bed of the Hué Mê Si Păn, and progress was necessarily slow. There was not so much water as in the Hué Nam Kǒng, but the rocks were more numerous and of greater size, and the going was hard on the ponies' feet. I was disappointed, as in many other places, at the absence of jungle fauna, for, with the exception of a sambhur deer that went stepping gracefully down a side-stream and some bright birds overhead, we saw no animal life at all.

The Hué Mê Si Păn bears a bad name among the peasants, for it is the haunt of 'spirits,' and in particular of a species known as 'Phī Pǒng,' who feed on dead bodies, and from whose mouths

burst fiery flames. Within recent years two stories have been told which have added materially to its evil reputation.

Some years ago a sergeant, with a party of gendarmes, was travelling between Chieng Khăm and Năn, even as I met a party of them on my way to Mưang Pông. But when they reached Nam Kống, the sergeant discovered that he had left his revolver at a 'Sālā' far behind, so he gave orders to two gendarmes to return and recover it. The pair set out, but by the time they reached the Mê Si Păn, the dusk had fallen. Still they went on until, suddenly, coming down the stream towards them, they saw two 'beings' carrying a corpse and with red flames issuing from their mouths and nostrils. The gendarmes stood transfixed, unable to move or speak, and as the two unearthly forms drew near, the gendarmes recognised to their horror the faces of two men, whom they knew by sight at Năn. The 'beings' reached the gendarmes, gazed at them, and then passed by—without a word or sound. As soon as the 'Phi' had disappeared from sight, the gendarmes ran for the 'Sālā' as fast as their legs could carry them, and there, with feverish haste, they cast off their uniforms, wrapped up their guns within them, and flung them into the bushes. Then they made straight for Chieng Khăm, where they were met just outside the town by another sergeant, who arrested them as deserters. They were duly tried for that offence, and though they stuck to their story of the 'Phi,' the Court declined to believe them, and they were convicted and punished. Still a doubt remained in some people's minds, since why, if they wished to desert, should they return to Chieng Khăm, five days' journey from the Hué Si Păn, and where they were bound to be recognised and caught. Now this case had a sequel.

Some years afterwards, a lieutenant was travelling along the same road with a party of gendarmes including Ai Khăm, one of the two men concerned in the former exploit, and after a time he became aware that, however fast or slowly he walked, he always found Ai Khăm at his heels. This at length became irksome, so he stopped and asked Ai Khăm why he kept so close to him. The gendarme answered that he was afraid of the Hué Mê Si Păn, and, when pressed for his reasons, with great reluctance, he told the lieutenant the story which has just been narrated. Nothing more was said until sometime later in the day the gendarme cut his foot on a sharp piece of rock, and was unable to walk any further. The lieutenant therefore advised him to sit down and wait for the main body, which was some little distance behind, to arrive. After much pressing, the

gendarme was persuaded to do so, and the lieutenant continued on his way. Eventually the latter arrived at the end of his day's journey, and later was followed by the troop of gendarmes under his command. But when the lieutenant called for Ai Khăm, the man was nowhere to be seen, and, on questioning his troop, one and all declared that they had not met him on the road: in fact, he has never been seen since.

Two more years elapse, and we find Ai Sêm, the second of the two gendarmes, placed on his trial at Nān as an accessory in a case of murder. He was found guilty and, entering the Nān prison, had leg-chains hammered on to his ankles. He had served some six months when one day he was sent with a party of prisoners to cut wood in a forest close to the city. By chance he became detached from the warders and the other prisoners, and when the roll-call was read, Ai Sêm had disappeared, and he, too, has never been seen since. But they found his leg-chains under a tree—intact.

I have given you the tales as I heard them and, whatever our own private opinions may be, certain it is that all my servants believe that these two gendarmes were wafted away and eaten by the ghoulish 'Phi Pông,' because they had dared to relate to other mortal ears the strange sight they had seen on the Mê Si Păn.¹

The name of the 'Hué' means 'The Stream of the Four Thousand,' and it derives this name from an incident in the history of the North, when the Burmese were beginning to lose their grip on the country in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The Burmese had their headquarters in the district at a small village named Mûang Thõng, some 80 miles to the north-west of Nān, and I remember, as I passed through that village on my way to Chieng Rai, seeing a stockade formed of teak logs, which was possibly built by the Burmese General who pitched his camp there. From Thõng a force of four thousand Burmese was despatched south towards Nān; but they were led by a renegade Lao who had concerted measures with his own countrymen beforehand, and when this force entered the narrow gorge, now known as the Mê Si Păn, the Lao, who were lying concealed on the heights above, flung down upon them rocks and stones of enormous weight. Caught in a trap, from which there was no escape, as the Lao had a force at either end of the ravine, the Burmese perished to a man, and thus the stream obtained its name—Mê Si Păn—'the Stream of the Four Thousand.'

It seemed as if the road was not greatly used, for travellers

¹ I have good reasons for believing that the two stories are pure fiction.

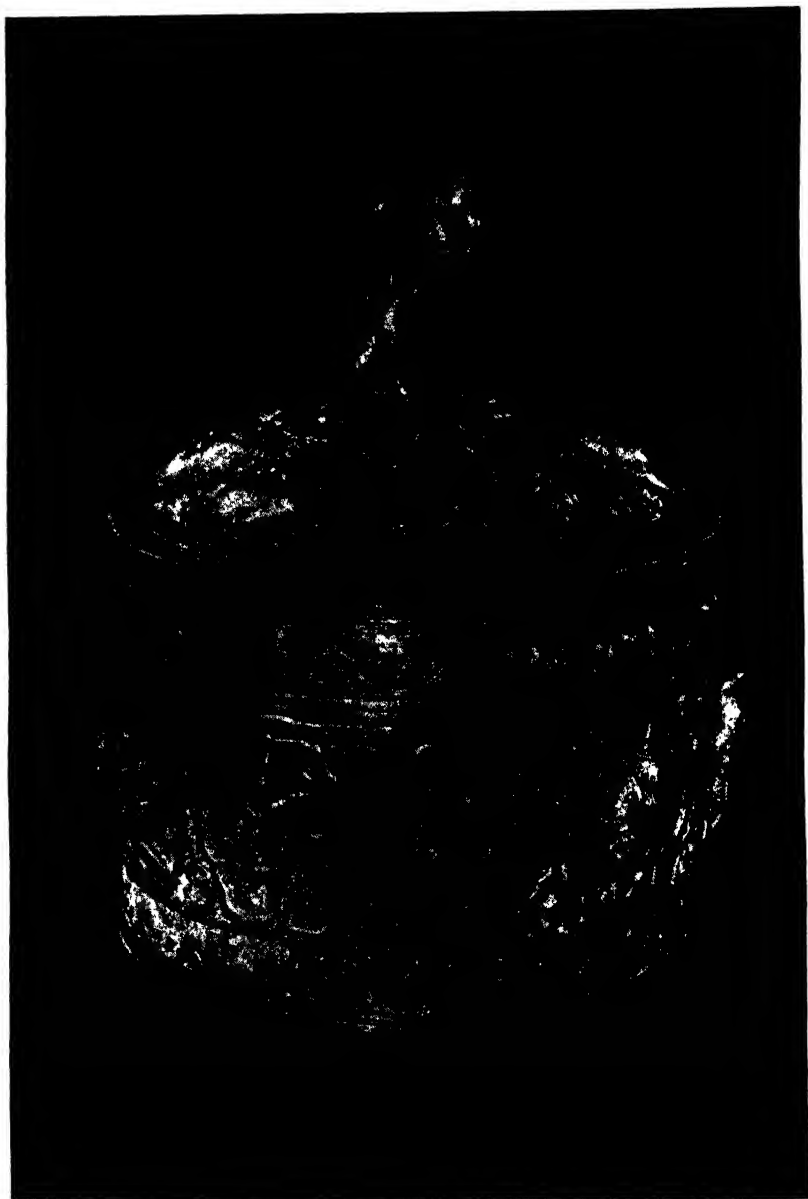
were rare. Once we met, passing through to Nān, a priest and a novice, whom we found cooking their simple meal on a rock in the middle of the stream. Just by their side we saw an old disused cave, half closed with plant growth, and above, on the hillside, we could espy the remains of an ancient Buddha, placed there for the protection of all wayfarers, who follow the eight-fold path; and the priest had no doubt chosen the spot to pay his devotions, and take his frugal meal.

At length we left the gorge through which the stream runs, and an hour's tramp brought us to the 'Sālā' at Mūang Sūat. We found some 'Mīang' that day, growing wild in the forest. It is a species of the tea-plant, whose leaves are boiled and then compressed into lumps to be chewed as the sailor chews his quid. It is a food which finds great favour among the peasants, on account of its sustaining properties. It may be in some way related to the coca-tree.

In the afternoon one of the mules' eyes began to swell, and evidently something must have pierced it on the road. The elephant headman at once came forward and offered to cure it. For this purpose he produced a kind of yellow powder and a small blow-pipe. He put the powder in the pipe and then, approaching the mule, which eyed the proceeding with great disfavour, suddenly blew it into the eye. The poor animal stamped and ran about, as far as its rope would allow, like one possessed; but, whatever the powder was, even if only pepper, it was most effective, for on the following morning a long thorn was found protruding and the swelling had decreased; in two or three days the eye became quite normal again.

A visitor of years ago has left a record of an ancient tree at Mūang Sūat, in which the spirit of the province dwells. I could not discover whether the tree still stands, but apparently the visitor camped under its shade, and was promptly waited upon by a deputation of the villagers, to warn him against the danger which he ran. They said that daily offerings were made to the spirit in the tree, and that no one ventured near at night, for the spirit would not fail to wreak his vengeance on the intruder. Apparently the visitor passed through the ordeal unscathed; but in any case there is a 'Sālā' built now, and the spirit is no longer in danger of being disturbed.

The night we spent at Mūang Sūat was, I may freely assert, in spite of the latitude, one of the coldest I have ever experienced in any land. I doubt if the temperature went below 40° F.; but this meant a drop of 45° F. since mid-day, and a piercing wind whistled through every crevice in the rattan walls of the



BURMESE SILVER BOX (*over 200 Rupees in weight.*)
(*From the author's collection.*)

bungalow. Even with quantities of overcoats and blankets it was too cold to sleep, and we eventually packed up and left at three in the morning, and spent the remainder of the night travelling, with blazing torches to guide us.

After leaving the 'Sālā' we crossed a stream three or four times in quick succession and then began to climb. The hills were covered with woodland and undergrowth, but of a different nature from that which lines the hillsides between Nān and Mūang Sūat. There the mountain sides and ravines are covered with the densest and most luxuriant jungle growths; on the Chiengmūan hills Nature is not so profuse, but still with her infinite charm scarcely less pleasing to the eye. The jungle was what is termed in the North 'Pā Pēh,' and is in fact very like our English woods with their beech and firs at regular distances, not too close together, and bracken and fern beneath. For a further two hours we continued to climb, and gradually, as we rose above the mists, we were able to see the tops of the smaller hills, which surrounded us on all sides, steeped in the morning sun. The air was wonderfully clear and fragrant, and the mind seemed to be undergoing a sort of spiritual spring-cleaning with every step we took. At the summit, about 3000 feet above the sea-level, the view was unfortunately obscured by the encircling hills and woods, and we caught but the merest glimpse of the plain below. So we did not stop, but went on down the other side, and it took us three hours or more before we finally reached the level again, where the jungle became more dense and where the giant trees were choked and strangled by the creeping growths.

What horrible forms these parasites take, like great serpents twining their bodies round their prey. Striplings and giants were clutched alike in the creepers' coils. No matter how tall the tree, the parasite had reached the top; no matter how young and tender the shoot, the creeper sought to strangle it at birth. I cannot help thinking that old travellers' tales of gigantic snakes must have been born of the illusion which these monstrous parasites create.

At length we left the forest and passed along a narrow path between banks of a sickly, flowering, purple weed, called 'Yā mūang wai,' or 'the grass that overwhelms cities,' which springs up in the North wherever much felling of timber has taken place, and of which, where this year there are ten plants, next year there will be ten thousand. At the end of the narrow path we crossed a stream and found ourselves in the village of Chiengmūan.

The rest-house, which lay opposite the gendarmerie station, was full, so we passed on through the rice-fields to Băn Măng, a tiny village on the Hué Mê Pí, through which the cart-road made by the Anglo-Siam Corporation passes on its way north from Phrê to Mưang Pông. We found a hollow on the further bank of the stream and there we pitched our camp.

The inhabitants of Chiengmưan are not Lao but Lữ, a kindred tribe of the Tai race which comes from the country known as the 'Síp-sông Păn Nă,' i.e. 'The Twelve Divisions of Fields,' which lie to the north-east of Siam and east of the Shan States. They are geographically part of China, but I doubt if the suzerainty assumes any practical form. Many of the Lữ have in the course of time settled in Siam by reason of disturbances in their own land, but the type, though kindred to, still remains distinct from, the Lao. The face is broader, more like the Chinese, and the hair is done in a different fashion. The men wear it short, but the women do their hair like the Khămư men, twisted behind in a 'bun.' They speak very nearly the same language as the Lao, but in a different tone of voice and not so distinctly as the latter. They occupy the whole district from Mưang Sưat to Chieng Khăm, five days' journey north.

There are so many different tribes and races in the North of Siam that it requires a good deal of time and study to distinguish them from one another.

Between Phrê and Chiengmưan I met Siamese, Lao, Shan, Burmese, Toungsư, Lữ, Yao, and Khămư; these last being mostly French protégés from the East bank of the river Mê-không. And later on I met yet another tribe in the neighbourhood of Chieng Rai, the Khôn, who come from the Chieng Túng district in the Shan States and are British subjects. Of these the Burmese, Toungsư and Shan are either timber contractors with the Teak Companies, or traders, in cloth, in 'miang,' in fact, in anything which will bring grist to the mill. The Khămư are foresters and great elephant riders, employed by the firms in felling and dragging timber; but the Lao and Lữ are the tillers of the soil, each cultivating his own fields of rice. Some grow tobacco as well. I have seen many fine crops of this plant in the North, and it would indeed be hard to find a single man, woman or child, who does not smoke the fragrant weed.

In the cool of the evening the Lữ men and women came down to bathe in the stream, and it was a comedy to observe what pains the women took to preserve a show of modesty. The men merely stripped and walked into the water, using their

hands as a screen, but the women's antics were grotesque to a degree. Gradually and gingerly drawing their 'sin' up to their knees as the water grew deeper, they would suddenly attempt to whisk the 'sin' above their heads and sink their bodies below the surface—all with one motion. The thought that rose naturally in my mind was—if they felt any shame about the matter, why didn't they bathe at home? But apparently they preferred to take their bath in public in company with numbers of men. Mixed bathing, as practised in the Hué Mē Pī, would certainly cause comment at some of our European seaside resorts, but actually it left a doleful impression to think how sophisticated these folk had become. No doubt in the centuries past the forefathers and foremothers of these men and women bathed naturally all together, as the folk still do in Japan to-day, and thought nothing of it. But now they have eaten of the Fruit of the Tree and are ashamed.

Watching the men bathe brought an interesting subject to my mind, namely, the tattoo marks with which their limbs are covered. Before they came to Siam to live among the Lao, the Lü did not practise any form of tattooing, but they have now lived among them for so long that it is a settled custom for the men, but not the women, to have their bodies marked. The older generation are marked from the waist to the knee, but apparently this custom has now fallen out of fashion, for the younger people are only tattooed from the waist to half way down the thigh. This gives them a curious appearance, and when I first saw young men bathing in the rivers, they appeared to be wearing some kind of bathing drawers. The colour used is usually a dark slate-blue, and every kind of subject is depicted on their bodies, beasts, birds, dancing girls, the date of their birth, just as the fancy takes them. It takes two or three days to complete, and often the 'sitter' cannot rise from his bed afterwards for ten days or more. One of the reasons given for tattooing is that it entails bravery and endurance; and those who have not the courage to undergo it are classed among the womenfolk.

The Shan, Tounsū and Burmese are more elaborate in their 'markings,' for, in addition to those parts mentioned, they tattoo the remainder of their bodies, their arms and legs, usually with a red pigment. This is merely custom, but a deeper significance underlies the deep blue spots which cover the chest, back and arms. Here they have made incisions in the flesh and inserted precious stones, rubies for preference, to act as charms against any possible harm. Armed with such

talismans, *they say* that they do not fear even the rifle's bullet, and I heard of an example of this faith in charms in a case of shooting which occurred some time ago. Two Shans came into collision with the gendarmes, and one was shot dead. When the other was questioned as to the occurrence and the position which he occupied, he merely showed the charms on his body and said that they alone had saved him. At the same time it must be recorded that, at the first shot, he had retired into a wood as far as possible from the scene of the encounter.

The next morning we made only a short day's journey—for the elephants had travelled hard the past three days—as far as Tā Fā, where the Bombay Burmah Corporation were working a teak forest. That night was again extremely cold, and we left the bungalow very early on our journey north to Mùang Pǒng. The road was shady and at times led us along the banks of the Mē Yom. The banks of the river were high and straight, the water looked so cool and clear, and the tall forest all around, into which the river disappeared, lent an air of mysterious enchantment. Just before reaching Mùang Pǒng, I noticed a magnificent Bee-tree, of enormous girth, and with silver-smooth trunk, and high up on the branches a number of bee-nests, some old and hard, others still in the making. The latter are interesting, with their white waxen cells and long green tails lying along the branches, rather like large arum lilies, a contrast to the old nests, which were hard and black with age. The villagers were evidently eager to gather the honey, for all the way up the trunk of the tree were short pegs driven in to serve as a ladder. Yet it is only a chance source of food or income, and no serious attempt is made to foster the industry. The peasant is willing enough to take what Providence offers, but is too lazy or indifferent to bestir himself to any further activities.

We did not stop in the village of Mùang Pǒng itself, but went on some two miles further to the new Government Forest Office, where I was kindly lodged by the officer in residence. Close by were the headquarters of the Anglo-Siam Corporation, and the starting-point of the light railway which was being constructed into the forest of the Mē Chūn, some nine miles distant, for the purpose of extracting the teak in that forest and of bringing it down to the river Mē Yom which flows by Mùang Pǒng. The cart-road, which the Company had built, runs down from Mùang Pǒng past Bān Māng and Mùang Sōng, through the town of Phrē to the railway station at Dén Chai, a total distance of one hundred and five miles. The road from Phrē to Dén Chai, a distance of 14 miles, was made



LAO OCTAGONAL SILVER BOX OF GREAT BEAUTY.



SHAN ELLIPTICAL SILVER BOX.

(both from the author's collection.)

by the Administration some years ago, and is now metalled, and the road actually made by the Company ceased at Phrè. This latter road had been built solely for the purpose of bringing up by bullock-cart all the metal material necessary for the railway.

The construction of the railway, which was begun in June, 1913, has long since been completed, and it is now in full working order. The direction taken was in a north-easterly direction for twenty-six miles to a pass in the hills called Kiw Kéo, some five hundred feet above Mũang Pǒng. For the first nine miles it would pass through the forest of Mũang Pǒng, leased by the Bombay Burmah Corporation, but at the pass of Dǒng Dǎm it would enter the forest of the Mē Chũn. The contractors were mostly Shan and Burmese, but the coolies were of many races, Lao, Lũ and Khāmũ with their kindred tribes, the Khahōk and Khamit being the most prominent. The overseers were mainly Indians, who seem to be in demand on every railway line in the East for that purpose.

The coolie is the most difficult person in the world to deal with in money matters—and the most conservative. Some time ago the Company imported a large quantity of King George rupees for the first time (rupees were in the past largely used in the North of Siam), but out of the whole company of Khāmũ coolies, not one would accept the new coins. They were prepared to take King Edward rupees if absolutely necessary, but those they actually preferred were of Queen Victoria's reign. In this case the whole consignment had to be returned by road and rail to Bangkok and exchanged for those of an earlier reign. Even in the case of ticals the coolies are often very arbitrary and, while accepting some, will refuse others quite apart from their newness, for no apparent reason whatever. I remember another case in Lampāng where the rumour suddenly flew over the countryside (as if by telegraph) that only those rupees stamped 'Empress' were legally valid. Those marked 'Queen' were of no value. Some bright mind had added up the letters and found that some coins had 7 and others only 5. It needed many proclamations on bridges and elsewhere to reassure the people that 5 was as good as 7.

The railway built by the Anglo-Siam Corporation was the first such enterprise undertaken privately in the North of Siam. Naturally it attracted a good deal of attention and speculation as to its success, in view of the many natural difficulties to be overcome. It is therefore a pleasant task to be able to record the fact that the railway is amply repaying all the labour and

money spent upon it. The Borneo Company have now a similar light railway in the Mûang Fāng district, west of Chieng Rai.

From Mûang Pōng we followed the main road to Chieng Khăm still travelling almost due north. The distance was not great—only twenty-eight miles—and the country presented no especial features. The first day, indeed, was a dull one, the jungle on either side was very sparse, there were no hills to climb, and the only water to be seen ran in muddy streams. Suddenly, on turning a corner, we met a party of Hô driving their pigs to the market at Phrê. Twenty-one pigs in all, and the journey would take about three weeks. How many would survive? As they passed by, the men looked miserably cold in the morning mist.

It is very hard to make a peasant walk sharply in the cold weather to send the blood coursing through his veins; he always prefers to walk at a slow, halting pace, with his arms folded and huddled to his sides, in self-pity at his miserable state. I noticed this often among my own servants, and tried, in a few instances successfully, to teach them to walk at a brisk pace and swing their arms when setting out at the dawn of a winter's morning. Most of them laughed, but preferred to walk at the slower step and wait, like the bear, for the sun to appear.

Next day the way was much more pleasant, as, after passing the rocky hill which marks the boundary between the district of Chieng Rai and Nān, we entered the shady forest glades once more. Evidently the road was one much used, for several times we met Hô traders coming down from the Shan States—once a party driving a pack of mules, and at another time itinerant vendors, selling cloth, betel boxes, and a miscellany of articles. At another place I saw Khămū boys shooting at birds in the trees with cross-bows and bamboo arrows, a curious sight. As far as I could see, their efforts were not successful. After an easy five hours' march we reached Chieng Khăm, and put up at the house belonging to the Forest Department.

Chieng Khăm is a long straggling village, lying in a valley and almost surrounded by hills, which rise at no great distance. It is a picturesque spot, for the river Mê Lao runs through it, and at the end of the village, on the main road, there is a splendid panorama to the east of a long range of mountains running north and south and rising at some points to close on four thousand feet. The district officer took pride in informing me that the rice crop of Chieng Khăm was more abundant than in any other district of Northern Siam; and Chieng Khăm may

indeed be said to be the beginning of the great rice plain which stretches north to Chieng Rai, Chieng Sên, and far beyond into the Shan States. The population of the district is about twenty-six thousand, but Chieng Khăm itself cannot contain more than two thousand of this number, the majority of whom appeared to be Lû. To my mind the Lû form a clear link between the Lao and the Chinese, for the younger women especially have, many of them, those almost waxen features one sees in Chinese women, and yet the influence of the southern climate is clearly shown by the loss in stature and physique. I found them just as kindly as the Lao, responding cheerfully to a word of greeting or a jest, yet perhaps a little more reserved on account of their less frequent intercourse with white strangers. It may have been the cold at that season of the year, but I noticed that none of the children, not even the smallest, ran about naked as they do in most other parts of Siam; they all wore a little 'sin' and jacket in the case of the girls, and diminutive trousers in the case of the boys. The Shan and Toungsû who live in Chieng Khăm call the Lû 'Yŭan,' a term which in the south is now applied to Annamites only, but formerly to all 'foreigners.' Yet I think the Shan regard all who come from the East bank, or French side, of the Mêkhông as 'Yŭan.' The people seemed industrious as far as their nature allowed them, for, in addition to their rice crops, they grew a certain amount of cotton, and also cultivated silk-worms. But they only spin the cotton and weave the silk for their own immediate purposes, and I heard that at the end of the year they eat the silk-worms, which they consider delicious, with the exception of about fifty, which are kept for the ensuing season.

The articles of clothing, which the Lû make and dye themselves, are distinctive. The trousers are of coarse dark blue cloth, bell-bottomed like a sailor's, and with several narrow stripes of colour round the lower edge. The double-breasted jackets for the women are made of much finer and softer material, but still of dark blue, edged with colours and adorned with little pieces of silver. They are very small and no doubt cut after the prevailing fashions of the day. One finds in Chieng Khăm a large number of Shan articles for sale, brought down by traders from Chieng Tŭng, women's sandals of wool dyed purple, with soles of untanned buffalo-hide; patterns worked in coloured silks for sewing on to cloth; Shan jackets which button across like a tunic, and the like.

The only other things of particular interest which I noticed in Chieng Khăm were, first, a water-wheel for milling rice, and

during the whole of my journey I only saw one other, a large one by the riverside at Chieng Rai; and secondly, that the priests wore red robes, which are unusual, although one often sees dark brown in place of yellow. One could not help noticing, also, that the temples of Chieng Khăm were poorly built and poorly preserved. Either the people were too poor, or too contented, to maintain them.

Before we leave Chieng Khăm, there are certain other habits and customs of the Lû worth recording. For some years past the Siam Society has been making detailed enquiries regarding the little known tribes of Siam, and what follows is taken from a paper on the Lû published in their journal.

It is said of the Lû that they prefer to live in the valleys near the banks of a river; this is, of course, merely to repeat that they are agriculturists pure and simple. Their manners and behaviour are gentle and orderly, and they know how to adapt themselves to changing conditions and times; also their houses, which are usually of one storey, with a high, raised flooring, are kept clean.

One point to be noticed in the children is that when they are born they usually have black or blue patches on their backs, but after 8 or 9 months these patches disappear.¹ After the child has been born, it will be washed by the midwife in cold water, wrapped in two or three folds of cloth and placed in a cradle, which is set up opposite the opening of the steps of the house. The midwife will then stamp on the wooden flooring two or three times to make the child frightened and cry out, at the same time calling upon the 'spirits,' if the child is theirs, to take it away; since if they do not do so at once, but allow it to enter the human family, they will never have the chance again.

Infants are not fed on milk, except from the mother, and then not for long; when they are still quite small, they are given strips of bananas, first dried in the sun and steamed, and then chewed by the mother together with glutinous rice until they become a soft mass. This is then given to the child to eat, and the mother will go on doing this until the child's teeth are cut and it can eat grains of rice by itself. When adolescent, the Lû are fond of staining the teeth black and also of cutting them, but this latter is said to be a late practice. A curious feature of

¹ These patches are not peculiar to the Lû, but are common to the Siamese and the Chinese, and possibly to all Far Eastern peoples. They are found more usually on the loins and buttocks. The reason given to account for them is that the child, while yet unborn, struggles to prevent its own birth, and the 'spirit' which governs child-birth tries to compel it to be born by beating it.



TYPE OF OLD WATER-WHEEL IN THE RIVER NEAR CHIENG KAY

their social organisation is that young men and unmarried girls endeavour to collect a number of mattresses for sleeping on, 3, 4 or 5, as the case may be; so that when they marry, they will not require any more. Their own peculiar manner of dressing has already been touched upon, but it is said that during the past quarter of a century they have gradually been giving up their own costumes, and many of them now dress in the Chieng-mai (Lao) fashion.

When the rice season is over and the harvest has been gathered in, i.e. about January, parties of Lū go out into the jungle and make clearings; and when the land is fully prepared they plant cotton, maize, beans, sesame, and pumpkins, and stay on the land until the rains set in and they must return home for the rice-planting season.

As regards courtship and marriage, if a young couple fall in love and their respective families are agreeable, a day is appointed for the betrothal. The bridegroom will bring a cluster of about 100 areca nuts and the bride will bring the same, as symbols that the two families are united together. The man will then deposit two 'hoi' of silver money, already referred to in Chapter VI, about 12 ticals in value, as the purchase price; and at the same time the girl will present a dish of flowers and four pairs of wax candles, and ask the man to accept her as his child. The ceremony is then at an end, and in the evening the bridegroom will go to the bride's house and take up his abode with her there. He must take with him two things in particular, a sword and a bag for carrying betel nut, which are the essential possessions of a real man.

Divorce is simplicity itself. If a couple wish to part, the man must once more pay the woman the sum of two 'hoi,' and the act is complete.

Finally, as regards the ceremonies at death, if a person is dying, the relatives will go to a priest and ask to borrow his begging-bowl and a set of yellow robes. These they will place at the head of the bed, and preach to the dying man 'the Buddha, the Law and the Order,' making him repeat this formula until he loses consciousness. After death the body is washed and clothed in a new coat. Both the hands are tied together with white thread, and flowers and candles are placed in the palms pointing upwards. The toes are tied together as well. In addition, a waxen boat is also placed in the dead man's hands, the symbolism of this ceremony being that the flowers and candles are to be offered to the relics of the Lord Buddha in the Crystal Pagoda of Heaven, and the boat is to carry the dead man

across the vast Ocean of Eternity, and help him escape from the relentless Wheel of Life.

The body is later removed to the forest for cremation and the exact spot is chosen by flinging away at hazard a bag containing a single egg. The spot where the egg breaks is considered the 'home' of the dead man, and there the cremation takes place.

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But the story-teller waits and, though patient, is mildly indignant, for he also can tell tales of the Crystal Pagoda of Heaven and the joys there awaiting the Blessed, and thinks we are almost encroaching on his domain. So he points to the star-strewn sky and asks us if we know how the Pleiades came to be there.

Now we all know 'the Pleiades,' or 'the Seven Sisters,' daughters of Atlas and Pleione, who were changed into stars. In the west these seven twinkling lights are not very brilliant, but in the east, on a clear night, they stand out against the deep blue sky like a pendant of shining diamonds. It is a wonderful experience to sit outside one's tent at night in the forest and watch Orion and the Pleiades mounting the sky. They have long since become old friends of mine. But we have no idea how they came to float in the Eastern sky, and eagerly listen to the voice of the charmer, as he begins.

THE STORY OF 'THE PLEIADES'

Once upon a time there lived a goodman and his wife, who tended the royal gardens. One day Phya In,¹ in the guise of a Buddhist priest, came to the garden to beg for his morning bowl of rice, and asked permission to rest there for that day and night.

The goodman and his wife gladly granted his request, and consulted together, saying: "What shall we offer the priest to-morrow morning to eat with his rice?" The wife said, "We have an old hen with her brood of six chicks. The chicks are still very small, so let us kill the old hen and make a curry for the priest to eat to-morrow morning." But her husband was angry and said: "On no account kill her—have pity on the chicks; what will they do without their mother?" Then the wife became angry, too, and cried out: "Very well, if you don't want to kill the hen, please mind your own business; I will do

¹ Phya In is the Lao corruption of the Hindu God 'Indra,' who in Buddhist-Brahmin mythology is the Buddha's Protector. In Siamese he is called 'Phrā In.'

it myself." Now the mother-hen, who was in the yard, heard all that passed between them, so she called together her brood and addressed them thus:

"Come here together before me, all of you. To-morrow morning your mother will be no longer alive, but food for man. They are going to kill and dress her as curry for the priest, who is now our guest, to eat. So you must all stand by one another and be good."

Then all the chicks began to cry, saying, "Our mother is going to die—who will feed us then? If they kill our mother, let us all die together with her." Thus said all the chicks.

The next morning came, and the good wife rose early and went into the barn¹ which was under the house, where the chickens were sleeping. Quickly she seized the mother-hen, killed her and plucked her. Then she prepared boiling water in a pot, popped the hen inside, and put the rice on to the fire to cook. When they saw the water boiling with their mother inside the pot, all the chicks rushed up and, jumping into the pot, perished together with her.

So the good wife prepared the curry and gave it to the priest to eat. And when he had eaten, Phya In, who was disguised as the priest, mounted in the air before their eyes and flew away to Heaven.

Then the goodman and his wife were both stricken with wonder, and vowed that never would they touch chicken's flesh again. It should always in future be reserved for priests.

For this act of renouncement, when the old couple died, they were born again as angels, and lived in Heaven. But the mother-hen and her chicks were born again as stars, in one heavenly company. And there they are always to be seen in the sky, a pendant of jewels, for the delight and wonder of mankind.

¹ Siamese and Lao farm-houses are built on tall piles, as protection against water, thieves and animals. The basement thus formed is used as a barn.

CHAPTER XI

From Chiengkham to Chieng Sên

WE left Chiengkham, almost feeling our way on account of the early thick mists, and as we passed close by the market-place, which even at the hour of six was thronged with men and women, clad in a medley of coloured and chequered shawls, all stared at me with wondering eyes, as at some strange being.

We were making north-west for Chieng Rai, sixty miles away, and our first halt was to be at Mûang Thong. We had to cross the Mê Lao three times, and once the Mê Ngao, which was slightly swollen; otherwise we spent the morning on a straight, narrow road, very much like an English country-side, with hedges and trees on either hand. Near Thong there was a small patch of jungle, but the day's march was a hot one, and we were thankful enough when we arrived at the village and stopped at the new 'Sālā' which has just been completed.

In the evening I watched the novices and children gathering at the Temple opposite for evening prayers, and later listened to the monotone of the priest and his child congregation, returning thanks for their daily bread. The small folk were well behaved and attentive.

Some of the boys will later become novices and remain so until the age of twenty, when they will take orders and become priests if they so desire. But in order to attend the temple school it is not necessary to undertake to become a novice; nor, if a boy has so become, is it necessary later for him to become a priest. Moreover, even if he has become a priest, he can always retire at will. The only distinction is that, if a man has been a novice, he can at any time afterwards enter the priesthood, but if he has once been a priest and retired, he cannot enter again. The Lao have a peculiar custom of giving each man a different prefix, according to the nature of his religious training.¹ Thus, if a man has always been an ordinary layman, he is known as 'Ai'; on the other hand, if he has been a novice,

¹ In Central Siam, in the countryside, a person who has retired from the priesthood is often known as 'Tit,' which is short for 'Pandit,' e.g. 'Tit Deng.' The term 'Ai,' as a rule, is only used for convicts; but among the peasant folk it is also used as an intimate term, either by older folk to younger, e.g. a father will call his son 'Ai Deng,' or between friends of the same age.

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but has not entered the priesthood, the prefix is 'Noi'; and thirdly, if he has entered the priesthood but afterwards resigned, he is called 'Nān.' Lastly, the priest is called 'Tū Chao.'¹ I had, for instance, in my company two 'Nān,' and two 'Noi,' while the remainder, that is, those who were Lao, were simple 'Ai.' These are the different forms of address, but it is worth recording that, as far as religious status is concerned, the man who has never been a novice or a priest is known as 'kon dīp,' i.e. a raw or green man, 'dīp' being the word used for unripe fruit.

The next morning, almost immediately after starting, we came to the river Mê Ing, the important Siamese tributary of the Mêkhong, which we found only just fordable for the ponies. Having safely crossed, we walked straight ahead through a thick and chilling mist. There was no doubt that we were in a valley, for it was half-past ten before we saw the sun or the first speck of blue. By eleven o'clock the mists had, however, all rolled away and it began to grow hot; and I was beginning to despair of such a tedious road when we suddenly dived into a belt of evergreen jungle again, with the Hué Mê Loi twisting in all directions through it. We spent a pleasant hour crossing the stream and climbing the hills before we reached the hamlet of Chieng Kian, and caught sight of the bamboo stockade surrounding the 'Sālā'. The only people we met that day were a pack caravan of Shan traders going as far as Chieng Khăm to sell cloth.

After leaving Chieng Kian the way lay for some time through the woods, but later on we left them behind and travelled across an open untitled plain, covered with tallish yellow grass and with a few shrubs and trees raising their heads like oases in the desert. It took us more than an hour to cross the plain, and no sooner had we reached what appeared to be the end, than we found a small cluster of bamboos and trees dividing it from another similar plain, but of about half the extent. Far away on either side were green-clad hills, running the length of the view. The plain was alive with hares and rabbits and not far off were the haunts of larger game, for the district teems with tiger, rhinoceros and wild elephant, of which latter some years ago a number were caught and sent to Lamphūn. It seems that, many years ago, the reigning 'Chao' of Lamphūn, which is 17 miles south-east of Chiengmai, let loose a number of domestic elephants in the district between Chieng Khăm and Chieng Rai, and that

¹ This is the Lao equivalent of the Siamese word 'Phra.' In Lao 'Phra' corresponds to the Siamese 'Nén' (i.e. novice).

the property in these elephants and their descendants is still vested in the 'Chao's' family.

The method of catching these animals is the same as is practised in most other districts and countries, namely, by means of tame elephants which gradually drive the wild ones into the 'keddah' prepared for them; but Noi Chanta, one of my mahouts, who was an expert at the game, told me that the beaters themselves will often pick out their beast and spring on to his back by the ready route of the animal's tail. Once aboard, they hope to be safe, but it must be a dangerous business. The beaters are either Lao or Khămū, and apparently they have implicit confidence in themselves as long as they are wearing round their necks a special charm which the priest has blessed. It is said that faith will remove mountains. It certainly seems so in this case.

Shortly after leaving the plain behind we reached the village of Bān Sāt, where we spent the night. Near the village I met an Englishman who was farming there and who at first had intended to breed ponies. For this purpose he had bought two stallions in the Shan States and these, with thirteen other ponies of varying breeds, formed his original stock. But he had foolishly chosen his land in the dry weather, and later on, when the rains set in, the place became a swamp and all his ponies died of 'surra,' a disease peculiar to horses, which is possibly caused by eating rank, damp grass. Now he had turned his energies towards the raising of cattle, pigs and fowls, in addition to a little hunting for the sake of the skins. From his accounts the hills to the East abounded in game, elephant, tiger, panther, the scarce wild dog, and even rhinoceros. Certainly he had not to go far for panther, since they were continually on the prowl round his compound at night, on the look-out for fowls and pigs. But the difficulty of hitting them in the dark was great, and when he had fired, more often than not he had hit his own animal instead. For his size, which is by no means large, the panther's strength is prodigious, for he will leap a palisade five feet high, seize a fat pig and kill it and take the return leap as if he were carrying a chicken. The cattle and pig farm also did not last long, and the farmer in question afterwards removed to the south of Siam, where he found kapok planting more successful financially.

The last stage to Chieng Rai was a short one. For more than an hour in the early morning we passed through thick bamboo jungle which had been the haunt of a tiger for some weeks past, but evidently he was resting, for we saw no sign of any beast.



GROUP OF UTENSILS FOR CHEWING BETEL-NUT, INCLUDING SIX LINE POTS, NUT-CRACKERS, HOLDER FOR THE BETEL-LEAF, AND PESTLE AND MORTAR FOR POUNDING THE NUT (*from the author's collection.*)

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At one place we came up with a party of Hô traders returning northwards. Their mules were bedecked with red rosettes and bells, and they carried a three-cornered flag of red, dotted with white stars, the significance of which I could not discover, as the Hô could only speak a Chinese dialect. As we approached nearer to Chieng Rai we met pack caravans, bullock-carts, priests, gaily dressed women, Shan traders—quite a throng of people on business or pleasure intent, and finally at the junction of the Chieng Khăm and Phâyao roads I was met by one of the principal Shans in the city, judging from the number of servants and men behind him. As we rode into Chieng Rai, I noticed a large number of Shan shops and houses on either side of the road, and the headman told me that the number of British Shans in Chieng Rai was very considerable, on account of its proximity to their own country.

It was during this stage of the journey that my Burmese clerk unburdened himself of a load which he had been carrying for some time past. During a conversation he suddenly turned to me and asked, "Is your Honour pukka English?" And when I replied "Yes, what makes you ask?" he answered, "Mr. — and Mr. — (naming two other Englishmen he had seen in Lampāng) are both white, but you are very *red*." He was much relieved to hear that redness was no bar to true English birth.

Chieng Rai is an attractive city, lying on the banks of the river Mê Khôk, a tributary of the Mêkhông. The city wall is built of mud, and one only catches a glimpse of it here and there, so that in this respect the city is not so favoured as the other towns in the north of Siam with their encircling red-brick walls; nor do I think it so big or so populous. The present city stands on the site of a former one of the same name, which has been referred to many times in the historical chapters, and was founded about the middle of the nineteenth century. An earlier traveller, who visited it in 1887, says that at that time only a small part was yet occupied, but that the gardens and rows of well-built houses then laid out gave signs of a prosperous future; at that time, of course, the population of the plain was very small and the country little developed. Nowadays, the city has been developed to a certain degree and is fairly populous, but there are great plains all around still uncultivated, and the population of the district is still on the small side. The rains in the Chieng Rai district are so steady and the soil so productive that bad rice harvests are almost unknown; yet there are thousands of acres of waste land waiting for immigrants to come and scratch

them. In this regard, persistent rumours are going the round that as a result of the new Treaty between Japan and Siam, large numbers of Japanese cultivators are coming to Siam to cultivate land in this district.

On entering the city from the south, you go straight down the broad main street, leaving shops and wooden houses on the right, and public buildings on the left, until you are brought to a halt by the river. There, if you turn to the right and pass down a narrow winding path for about half a mile, you will find yourself in the fine old rambling compound in which the rest-house stands. The compound, which runs right down to the river's brink, is a spacious one, and the view from the bank in the evening just before sunset has a charm of its own. Far in the distance, to north and west, lie long ranges of high hills with their summits veiled in the clouds. Straight across on the further bank is nothing but tall jungle grass, here and there relieved by patches of tobacco, but to the west can be seen the sharp outline of a green-clad hill, quite close to the city, rising to a point and forming the apex of a series of similar hills. On the nearer bank is a great cliff of red stone, with the garrison's barracks perched on the edge, and just below them and nearer still are a cluster of wide-spreading trees and a plantation of bananas, the vivid green showing up in harmonious contrast.

The river itself cannot compare with the Nān river for beauty, for the banks are low, but it is at least a hundred yards wide, and even at the end of January contained plenty of water. It flows very swiftly, and as a consequence the water is wonderfully clear. To the west it takes a series of sweeping bends, but to the east one sees a long, straight stretch of water, ending in rows of fishing stakes. This is the river in which it was reported that a number of 'Plā Beuk,' the sturgeon of the Mēkhōng, had been caught in the year 1707.

In Chieng Rai I noticed the same energy in the direction of public works as at Nān, perhaps to an even greater degree, for, in addition to a new prison and court-house, a new 'Khao Sānām'¹ was in course of erection. The court-house was complete and must be the largest building of its kind in the North, built of wood on piles of cement and brick, with a spacious hall, and chambers and offices attached. The prison was being built on exactly the same plan as that of Nān, but the construction was not so far advanced as in the latter. All these buildings have long since been completed. The new buildings were being erected on the site of the old gaol, and the old bamboo structures

¹ Offices of the Administration.

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were still in use when I visited the prison. It was interesting to observe the low, broad floors of teak inside the main building, slightly raised and running along the four outer sides of a large interior cell. On these the prisoners slept at night in rows, and all possible attempts at escape or disturbance were effectually frustrated by a long iron chain passed through the leg-irons of each man, and then fixed in the wall; so that no one could make any serious movement without clanking the chain and rousing the whole prison. In the day time the sleeping mats were rolled up and placed side by side, and I could see how the floor had been polished and worn by the bodies of generations of prisoners, without the need for beeswax or any other polishing contrivance. There were eighty prisoners in the gaol, and among them several Shans, hardy ruffians, removed at last from their sphere of battle, murder and sudden death. When once such men have committed themselves to a life of dacoity and murder, they are dangerous folk to deal with, for they are all well-armed and will stop at nothing to escape arrest.

Just opposite the 'Khao Sānām' was the Governor's residence, and I never realised how roses could grow in the North of Siam until I entered the large garden attached to the house. Oblong beds, circular beds, beds of every design, planted with roses, and nothing but roses, alternating red and white. They were just past their best when I saw them, but the bushes were still crowded with blooms and presented a beautiful sight; a month before, when the garden was in full bloom, the mass of flowers must have been wonderful. In Bangkok, one can only grow meagre roses with the greatest difficulty, but in the North the soil is as good as it is at home, and the scent of the rose, though not so strong, is still fragrant.

There is a Station of the American Presbyterian Mission also in Chieng Rai, with its accompanying school and dispensary; and in addition, with funds provided by a wealthy American lady, a red-brick hospital has been built, with room for thirty patients. It lies pleasantly situated facing the river, at the foot of the Barracks hill. Like the dwellers of our slums at home, many of the peasants have an instinctive aversion to the comforts of a well-appointed hospital, but old prejudices are gradually being broken through, as they see their brothers daily cured of their ills. There can indeed be no doubt of the value of the medical work which the Mission is carrying on, and it is already apparent that all who come in contact with the medical missionaries soon appreciate the value of European treatment and medicine. It is only fair to say that the teak companies also

play their part in overcoming the peasant's disinclination to depart from his native mixtures of herbs and drugs, but this does not detract from the efforts which the American Mission is making to bring home to him the value of cleanliness and the efficacy of pure medicine.

A few of the inhabitants of Chieng Rai are of the tribe of Khõn, who inhabit the Shan States, and are now British subjects. During the last thirty or forty years a number of them have wandered down from Chieng Tung on trading expeditions; a few have settled in Chieng Rai, and there is quite a large colony at Pratū Hai Yā in the town of Chiengmai. The Khõn have many features in common with the Lũ and the Lao, and it is not always easy to distinguish the one from the other at a glance. In the prime of youth or of middle age it is not so difficult to separate those of either sex, for at that age each affects his tribe's own particular fashion in dress; but in old age they seem to sink to a monotonous level of a dirty ragged 'sĩn' with bare bosom in the woman's case, and an apology for a 'pănũng' with a small tattered jacket in the man's; certainly the old people suffer little from vanity on the score of dress. As a general guide, however, for purposes of distinction, the following points of difference may serve.

The skin of the Lũ is much whiter than that of the Lao—I have seen some of the Lũ girls' faces almost pink-white, of a delicate nature like a hot-house growth—and, broadly speaking, the Lũ are physically a bigger race. The face is much broader than in the Lao, and there is a custom in vogue amongst them of piercing the ear, which is not practised by the latter now, though once it was. A large hole is made in the lobe of the ear, which is elongated, and a disc of white wood, with a small piece of lead foil in the centre, is firmly fixed into the hole made. If you wish to know the reason why the lobe of the ear should be drawn down, look at an image of the Buddha, and the question will be answered. The Khõn practise the same custom also, only to a lesser degree, for they make only a small hole in the lobe, which is not stretched, and insert a piece of wood wrapped in a cloth. Otherwise the Khõn is very much like the Lao in appearance, being of darker hue than the Lũ. The Lũ women do not dress in quite the same way as the Lao and Khõn, for although they all use the 'sĩn,' the Lũ wear on the upper part of their bodies a double-breasted jacket, embroidered with red. The Lũ men, too, have distinctive trousers on which I have remarked before, which are of dark-blue cloth, bell-bottomed, and trimmed near the bottom with thin stripes of red, yellow

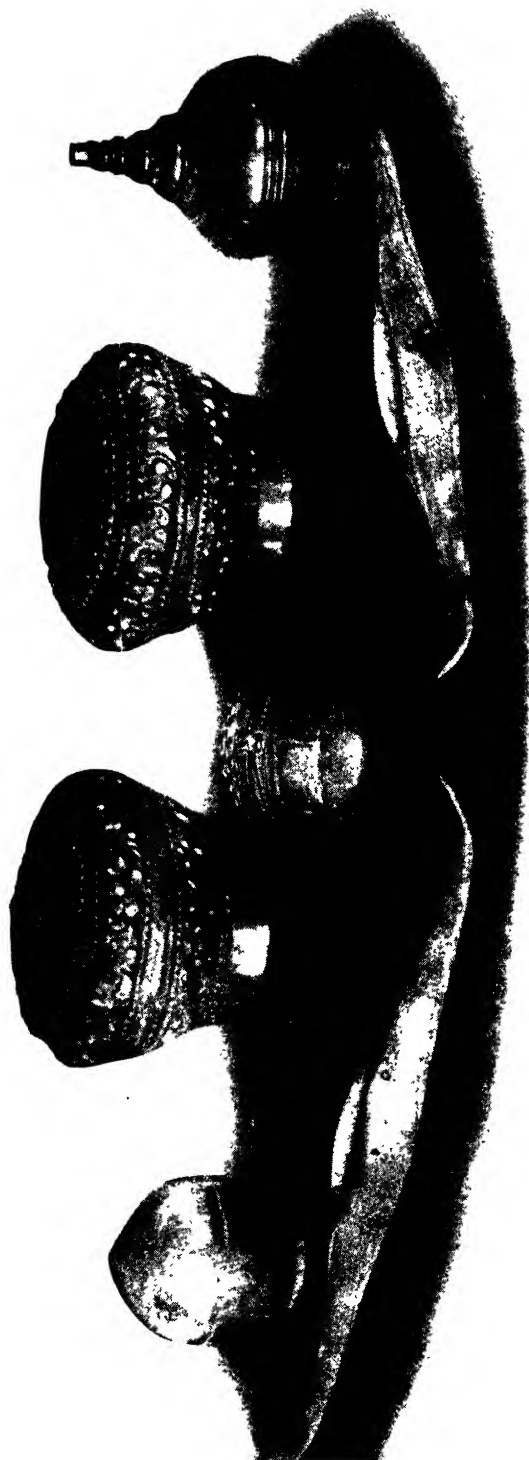
and white. The women of all three tribes are of small stature and, in contrast to the Siamese (who wear their hair clipped short), allow the hair to grow and draw it straight back over their head, to be twisted at the back in a 'bun.' In Chiengmai, however, especially among the better classes, there is now a tendency to follow the Burmese style of hair-dressing, and to 'do' it high on top. They carry themselves well, and have attractive, supple figures which are admirably draped by the 'sîn'; and, until maternal cares have weighed too heavily upon them, can boast their share of beauty. Can you not see a girl of sixteen, flower in hair and cigarette between her lips, posing at the door of her mother's house and, with provoking smile, bringing the young men to her feet? They have their fashions, too, the same as our ladies of the West. While I was in Chieng Rai, there was brought to me an old piece of Chieng Tũng gold brocade which had been in a Khôn family for a century or more. It had formed the bottom of a silk 'sîn,' long since worn out, but when the mother wished her daughter of eighteen to put it on to a new 'sîn,' the latter had tossed her pretty head and refused to be made the mock of all her friends. It was out of fashion. So now it lies in my keeping, for the sum of five silver ticals.

One afternoon I set out to visit a cave of Buddhas, of which I had heard, some distance up the Mê Khök, in a long, flat house-boat with two polemen in front and a steersman behind. The river Mê Khök is a winding swift-flowing stream, and it took a good two hours' poling against the current before we reached our destination. On one side of the bank we saw nothing but gardens and small 'rai' of tobacco, but on the other side, for the better part of the way, we passed along the face of a series of high cliffs, coming sheer down to the water's edge. Among the trees which grew out of the side of the cliff could be seen troops of small black monkeys, engaged in pulling each other's tails, until they caught sight of us, when they disappeared into crevices in the rock. The last bend of the river was almost a complete circle, and suddenly without warning we came upon a large opening in the cliff with a newly-restored Buddha, shining with gold leaf, set up in front of the mouth of the cave. There were two entrances to the cave, but a steep rock had to be negotiated before either could be reached. Passing through one of these openings, I found myself in a vaulted hall, naturally formed, with great stalactites of rock hanging down, green with mould and age. Straight in front was a high raised altar running almost the breadth of the cave and, slightly to the right

in front of it, another huge restored Buddha. On the altar itself the Buddhas lay and stood, heaped in dreadful confusion. Headless, standless, armless, there they were—of wood, of pottery, of brick, and the larger images of bronze—some half protruding from the rock, in which they were fast embedded. Most of the whole images had apparently long since been removed to temples and other places, for there was not much of interest to be found. I came across, in a deserted corner, an old well-carved teak image, with stand included some twelve inches high and cut in one piece—the body shorn of all its gold and the stand of faded vermilion; but even as I held it, the stand broke in two pieces, and the wood, I saw, had rotted away. After a prolonged search of the cave, however, I found my reward in the shape of a small head of sandstone covered with black lacquer and still showing faint traces of gold leaf. It was the head of a Saint (Arahant) rather than of Buddha, since there was no crown and the other sacred marks were wanting. It is only three inches high, but from the point of view of sculpture it is one of the finest that I have seen in Siam. The poise of the head is perfect and, although the front view shows the heavy Mongolian eyelids, in profile the aquiline nose and the firm mouth and chin betray an almost Roman inspiration. This head adorns the outside cover of the book.

The history of the cave is lost now, and though I was told there were still inscriptions to be found, search as I would, I could discover none. I spent, perhaps, an hour or more in the cave, prying and poking in the dust of ages, but dusk soon began to fall, so at length I climbed down into the boat again, to find the mists rising on the water and the air growing cold. As the boat glided swiftly down the stream in the cool evening breeze, my thoughts went back some hundreds of years, and set me wondering what could have induced the population to abandon the cave, and leave so many images to the thief and vandal. To our ordered minds such waste and decay seem incomprehensible. But in this part of the world what one generation builds and preserves, the next has no use for. Want of continuity of effort, and want of tradition, are potent factors to be dealt with in the character of the Tai.

In the town of Chiang Rai, near the Mission Hospital, there is a small unpretentious 'Wät,' set in a leafy garden, and on a board just within the door is written the name 'The Temple of the Emerald Buddha.' Now there is only one 'Emerald' Buddha in Siam, and that is the famous image, cut out of one piece of jade, which was brought from Wiang Chan about



SS POTS FOR BETEL-NUT; IVORY WEAVING SHUTTLES; SILVER AND BRONZE RELIQUE-BOXES; IN THE CENTRE, A SMALL BRASS
BOX FOR LIP-SALVE WITH RHINOCEROS HORN IN THE BASE FOR LUCK (all from the author's collection.)

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100 years ago, and has now found its resting-place in the Royal Temple at Bangkok.

'The Annals of the North' relate a long story connected with this 'Emerald' Buddha, and state that among its many resting-places, Chieng Rai was one. It was at one time obtained by the Prince of Chieng Rai from the Prince of Kamphêngphet, and set up in a temple at Chieng Rai; but was afterwards taken by the King of Chiengmai and carried off to that city. From Chiengmai it was taken to Lūang Prabāng in company with two other images about the year 1548, and from there, when Lūang Prabāng was split up into two Principalities, it made a further journey to Wiang Chan. It is probably from this tradition that the temple has received its name.

After a stay in Chieng Rai of eleven days, we struck camp at the end of January and set out north for Old Chieng Sên, two long days' march from Chieng Rai. The start was considerably delayed as we found the Mē Khōk unfordable for loaded elephants, and all the transport had to be conveyed across in boats, to be loaded up again on the further bank. Soon after we left the Mē Khōk behind, a storm which had been brewing for some time broke, but did not last long and only served to freshen the morning air. First we met a long caravan of bullocks, each animal with a basket on either side, carrying loads of padi from Bān Dū, a village close by, to the Chieng Rai market for sale. The owners were inhabitants of Chieng Rai, possessing rice-fields in the outlying districts, and making these caravan trips to bring in the yearly harvest. Later on, we passed by a small cluster of houses and I came upon a sight, not altogether unusual in this country. An old man, standing at his gate with a vacant look on his face, and a cloth cap of European make, with a very small peak, on his grizzled head (which gave him a very comical look); behind him two pretty young girls pounding away with their feet at the small rice-mill which is to be seen in every compound; and on the steps of the wooden house the old mother and her two sons smoking their cigarettes and watching the girls with calm content. The women of this country certainly cannot complain that there is no scope for their energies, for I am sure the men would gladly let them do all the work. You remember what Marini said of the latter, "very indolent, and much addicted to women, which is the bane of many." But actually the women have no need to complain, for they like work, and I have a shrewd suspicion as to where the ultimate authority in family matters lies.

The padi fields continued for some hours, but later on gave

way to waste, uncultivated land. In one of the fields we saw a group of twenty-one large birds, each about four feet high, the entire body, wings and legs of a slate-blue colour, but with dark-red caps and necks. They are found in certain parts of Siam, and are called Sarus birds (apparently of the crane family), but it is unusual to see such a large flock of them together. The rice-fields both in Chieng Rai and on the road to Chieng Sên had all been harvested, and the birds were evidently seeking a meal among the stubble which remained. .

At noon we came to a grassy spot by the side of a clear-running stream, well shaded by trees, and there I found two caravans of Hô from Yunnan encamped in a field close by, the one with cattle and the other with ponies, both going down to Phrê for trade. The headman of the latter party remembered having met me some eighteen months previously in Bangkok, where he had been on a visit in connection with a supply of opium for the Siamese Government from the Shan States. That must be a profitable trade for those concerned, and his eyes seemed to glisten at the thoughts of his share in it; but this time he had no opium, only Shan ponies for sale.

As I rested there awhile, a drove of cattle came down to the water to drink, driven by a boy in blue. He was tall for his age, which might have been twelve, and dressed in a tight-fitting tunic and short knickers, all of blue; on his head a broad-brimmed soft grey hat, which almost hid his laughing round face. His legs were long and very shapely, and as he came down the shady road, he danced like some faun of the woods. I could see his legs quivering as they came to earth, and every movement of his lithe body was a study in sculpture. Pan, the God of Arcadia, in human form once more, and only the pipe was needed to bring the nymphs to his side. Presently he took his bath, while his charges drank their fill, and then joyously back along the same path he went, casting shy glances over his shoulder at the stranger, but allowing nothing to restrain his boyish love of life, and air, and freedom.

Towards the end of the day's journey we passed through a stretch of forest, and could see hosts of small monkeys chattering in the trees, but we soon emerged on to the open plain again in the full blaze of the afternoon sun. As we approached New Chieng Sên, we passed another great Hô caravan going down to Chiengmai, a long string of ponies decked with red rosettes and bells and laden with bars of lead, which is much in demand as weights for fishing nets. Every pony, to the number of about a hundred, had a dozen or more bars upon his back;

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chillies, too, there were in abundance, packed in long narrow baskets. The party was a large and mixed one, Shan, Hô, Khôn, and Lû, all in their own distinctive dresses, well armed with guns and swords, and beating gongs as they went along. All round the new city stretched magnificent forest-clad hills, and more than once I could espy far up on the hill-side patches of vivid green, evidently the work of mountain tribes, trying to grow a little opium on the quiet, in the hope that the difficulty of approach would prevent the authorities from taking any active steps against them.

The new city is known by several names; in former days it was called Bân Mê Kî, after the stream which flows close by, but now it is usually referred to as Chieng Sên Noi (Little) or Chieng Sên Mai (New), to distinguish it from Chieng Sên Luang (Great) or Chieng Sên Kao (Old), which lies some twenty miles north-east of it, at the very apex of Siam, on the river Mêkhông. I will refer to New Chieng Sên again later on, as I returned by the same road to Chieng Rai, but at the time I was making straight for old Chieng Sên, and only stopped one night at the 'Sālā,' prettily set in its garden of roses.

Twenty miles is a long march for a tropical day, so off we set before it was light, and well that we did so, for till noon we saw no scrap of shade. We went steadily forward, first along the road between the rice-fields, and later across a swampy plain, then happily dry. After having to swim a stream, into which I had urged my pony before I had tested its depth, we pushed ahead, and, passing through several hamlets newly-built, came at length to the edge of a thickly-wooded forest. In one of the hamlets I almost trod on the tail of a very short green snake with a red band round its neck. The peasants call it 'kô deng' (red neck), and say it is deadly, but whether it is or not, it had a wicked little head and a venomous look, and I was not at all sorry that I was wearing thick boots and puttees. As soon as we entered the forest we started to climb, and for more than two hours found relief from the sun in the welcome shade. The undergrowth was already as dry as the proverbial bone; the bamboo leaves had fallen and were lying inches deep all round, ready to fan the forest fires which would break out later. Early in the afternoon we reached the end of the forest, but could still see nothing of Old Chieng Sên, in fact, nothing but a vast sea of tall jungle grass, bright yellow and eight feet high. A narrow track had been made through the grass, and down this we went for more than an hour, until I was suddenly aware, on our right, of a tall building rising out of the grass some

two hundred yards away. The jungle was too dense, and I too tired, to approach and examine it then, but I learnt subsequently that it was a well-known monument, called 'The Leaning Tower' of Old Chieng Sên. It sloped at a distinct angle from the ground, and was built of red brick, circular in design, with a castellated turret. It is thought to be of Chinese origin, by reason of the figures which have been found carved upon it, but whether it was designedly built to lean, or the foundations have sunk on one side, is more than can be said at present. Far away on the left I could see a wooded hill and, rising gracefully above the trees which crowned it, the spire of an old pagoda. Soon we reached the banks of the Mê Khăm, one of the Mêkhông's Siamese tributaries, and following this for some distance came to a narrow bamboo bridge. This we crossed in safety and arrived at the outer city wall. I say the 'outer' wall, for at the entrance there proved to be three stretches of wall one behind the other, all of red brick and with the openings planned at different places many yards apart, so that an enemy, having carried the first and even the second, would still find himself confronted with a blank face of wall, and would be so harrassed as to leave him an easy prey to the besieged. But we found no spears or cauldrons of pitch to receive us, and, passing through, stepped out on to a long, straight, grassy road, with thick woods on either side. As we went down, I could see the remains of temples and pagodas peeping through the trees, but not a sign of any house until near the end, when I caught sight of a wooden building being erected on an open levelled sward, and beyond that a great blank. I guessed what that blank meant and, though footsore and weary, I walked straight to the end of the grassy road, and stood and gazed at the great Mêkhông.

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That night, after we had pitched our tents, and all the camp had been fed, the Lao boys brought out their banjos and flutes, and when they were tired, we called with one accord upon our story-teller for a tale. This is what he told us.

THE STORY OF 'HĀN MĪ,'¹ OR THE VALIANT BEAR-SLAYER

Once upon a time there were a poor peasant couple, husband and wife, living in their tiny hut on the edge of the jungle. They had cleared a patch to grow their small crop of rice, and one day, as they worked, by chance a great bear came out of the

¹ Pronounced 'Hahn Mee.'

forest and, seeing the man and woman, rushed to eat them up. The husband, poor wretch, in a mighty fear, at once ran back to his hut and, dashing inside, barred the door behind him. But his wife picked up her husband's knife, which he had dropped, and killed the bear; and then returned quietly home. When she reached the little homestead, she called out to her husband to come out of the hut. But the husband's fear increased all the more, for he felt certain that the bear had killed his wife, and he thought it must be his wife's spirit come to deceive and torment him for his cowardice. So he called out through a chink in the door, "You are dead, do not come so close to me." But his wife answered, "I am not dead; I have slain the bear." Still he cried out in his fear, "I do not believe you, you are not a living woman, you are a spirit." At length, however, when she had many times denied that she was a spirit and had implored him to open the door, he was finally convinced by his wife's importunity; so he came out of the house, and accompanied her to their rice-field. When they came there, and he saw the bear lying dead on the ground, a thought struck him and he turned to his wife, and said: "If you are asked, who will you say slew the bear?" His wife stoutly answered, "I killed the bear, and I am now going to the King to tell him what I have done." Then her husband replied: "Softly, my dear wife—if you go to the King, you know, and tell him what you have done, both he and all the people will say that a woman who can slay a bear must be a very unpleasant person, and you will get no reward or comfort from them." With such like craft did he play upon her until he had persuaded her to agree that *he* should go to the King and say that *he* had slain a great bear in his rice-field. So off he set, and, reaching the Palace, told his story before the King. The King was greatly pleased to hear of his valour, yet a little suspicious withal—so he sent his servants to enquire into the truth of the matter, and they, finding the bear dead in the rice-field, came back to the Palace and reported to the King that the peasant had spoken the truth. So the King gave the peasant the name of 'Hăn Mī' (Valiant Bear-Slayer), and loaded him with honours and riches; and 'Hăn Mī' took up his abode at the Court and became known as a mighty warrior.

After Hăn Mī had been living there for some little time,⁵ it was reported to the King that a large snake of the name¹ of 'Chống Ra-ang'¹ had found its way into the palace-well, and that no one dared to attack it. So the King at once sent for

¹ The vernacular name for a hamadryad, or King Cobra.

'Hăn Mī,' and ordered him to slay the snake. 'Hăn Mī' was entirely at a loss what to do, but he had to obey the command, and as, with fear and trembling, he began to wind coils of rope round the neck of the well, in an attempt to catch the snake in a noose, he fell in. In his extreme terror he caught hold of the snake by the neck and gripped it so tightly that he killed it. Then, when he saw that it was dead, he recovered his composure, and, calling out to his fellows above that he had slain the snake, told them to lower a ladder so that he could get out of the well. As soon as he had climbed up the ladder, he took the snake straight to the King and showed him what he had done. Then the King was mightily pleased and, in admiration of his gallant action, loaded him with fresh honours and gave him the title of 'Hăn Mī Chǒng Ra-āng.'

Some four or five days after this incident had occurred, news was brought to the King that a large crocodile, which lived in a deep swampy marsh close by, was in the habit of devouring children who played by the water's edge, and was working havoc among the people.

So the King sent for 'Hăn Mī Chǒng Ra-āng' once again, and gave him orders to go and shoot the crocodile and bring the body back to him. He might take a boat and six men with him to drag the body out of the water.

So 'Hăn Mī Chǒng Ra-āng' set off with his men, and, when the party reached the swamp, they saw the crocodile slipping into the water from the mud to take his daily bath. As soon as he caught sight of the crocodile, 'Hăn Mī's' knees shook with terror, and he went and hid behind the other men; but they loaded their guns and shot the beast without any more ado. Then when he saw that the animal was truly dead, 'Hăn Mī' with great boldness seized a gun and shot it again; and slyly said to the men, "If you are asked, who will you say slew the crocodile?" The six men answered, "We shall say that we slew the crocodile, and we are going now to inform the King." Then 'Hăn Mī' answered them, saying, "You know the King gave *me* orders to kill the crocodile—won't you be punished if you say that *you* killed it instead?"

With such like talk he worked upon their fears until they agreed to let him say that *he* had killed the crocodile. So off they set with the body and told the King, who was well pleased with 'Hăn Mī,' and gave him the further title of 'Hăn Mī Chǒng Ra-āng Wǎng Chǒraké' (The Valiant Slayer of Bears, Snakes and Crocodiles), as well as gifts of gold and silver.

'Hăn Mī's' fame as a cunning and brave warrior now spread



TYPES OF WEIGHTS USED IN NORTHERN SIAM, DEPICTING MANY
KINDS OF ANIMALS (*from the author's collection.*)



TYPES OF LAO SILVER ANKLETS (*from the author's collection.*)

so far abroad that the Prince of a neighbouring country heard of it and determined to put his cleverness to the test. So having received permission to pay the King a visit, he loaded his boat with four boxes and set out. Now the first of these boxes contained silver, the second box, gold, the third box, jewels, and the fourth, fireflies, and 'Hăn Mĩ's' test was to guess what was in each box. But 'Hăn Mĩ' received news of what was toward, and, diving under the water, listened to the boatmen as they brought the boxes to land and heard the Prince tell the contents of each. He then returned home.

The Prince was duly received in State by the King, and conducted to the Palace, and at the appointed time 'Hăn Mĩ' was sent for. The boxes were placed in front of him, and he was ordered to guess the contents of each.

Without any delay or difficulty he guessed the contents of the boxes with silver, gold and jewels in them, but for the life of him he could not remember what was in the fourth. Long he sat and pondered, until suddenly he looked up and his eyes lighted on the wall of the Palace. Through the lattice-work he saw a gleam of light, and knew that it was caused by the fireflies. At once he turned and said: "The fourth contains fireflies." So he guessed all four correctly, and was loudly acclaimed by the King and Prince as a 'diviner' of the highest class.

Lastly, word was brought to the King that another neighbouring State was raising an army and preparing to attack his Kingdom.

As this State was accounted a very powerful one, the King was sore afraid, when he heard that the enemy had actually entered his country. So he sent for 'Hăn Mĩ,' and addressed him thus: "The enemy is at our door; their purpose is to seize our Kingdom and person. Our whole trust lies in you, 'Hăn Mĩ'; if you conduct our defence, all will be well and our Kingdom will be preserved. Aid us now in our time of need, and we will give you the half of our Kingdom to 'eat.'¹

'Hăn Mĩ' listened attentively to the Royal words and, promising his assistance, returned to his house. That same night he crept forth and, stealing into the enemy's camp, climbed up into the branch of a tree, where he could overhear the enemy's talk, as they chatted round the camp-fire. As he listened, he heard the words, "If we can only conquer 'Hăn Mĩ,' then we need fear no one else," but just at that moment, unfortunately for him, the branch of the tree on which he was lying snapped into two, and he fell headlong down into the midst of the camp.

¹ The word in the vernacular is 'kin,' literally, 'to eat.' It is an expressive word.

Yet, keeping his presence of mind, he leaped up saying, "Behold me here, if you want me. But I can mount into the air or dive into the bowels of the earth, just as I choose." The enemy in their terror and panic did not stop to listen. They just flung aside their arms and fled, as hard as they could run, and the Kingdom was saved. So 'Hān Mī' gathered up all the weapons and brought them to the King, saying, "I went out to fight the foe, and they fled before me, leaving all their weapons behind. Behold, here they are."

Then the King was glad that he had trusted in 'Hān Mī,' and he gave him half of his Kingdom to 'eat,' as he had solemnly promised to do. Finally, when the King was dying, he named 'Hān Mī' as his successor, and 'Hān Mī' became the ruler of the whole Kingdom, and lived happily ever after.

This is the end of the tale of 'Hān Mī', or 'the Valiant Bear-Slayer,' as handed down by ancient tradition.

CHAPTER XII

From Chieng Sên to Chieng Rai

It often happens that, when we have at last found the means to gratify some desire which we have cherished for a long time, especially to visit places of which we have heard such loud praises sung by our friends, the cup is dashed from our lips—our hopes are disappointed, and one more illusion is gone from our lives. But there are certain scenes and views in Asia, of which one may truly say that they beggar description, and that the full measure of their beauty or grandeur cannot be expressed in words. In India the view of Kanchanajunga and the Himalaya from Darjeeling is one, and the 'Taj Mahal' at Agra is another. These two are, I dare say, the most marvellous natural and man-made sights respectively in the world. But here in Indo-China we have, I think, yet another, and that is the river Mèkhong. There is something awe-inspiring in the vast volume of water which flows down a mighty river, and it is almost beyond the power of the pen to describe, to one who has not seen it, the impression of majesty which it creates. It is odd to think that, here in the Far East, still almost unknown to the West, we have the third or fourth longest river in the world, over four thousand miles long, rising in far away Thibet, in sources still practically unknown in spite of the endeavours of the famous Garnier, of Prince Henri d'Orléans and others, and falling into the China Sea through a multitude of deltaic channels around Saigon.

At Chieng Sên, the Mèkhong is by no means so wide as at many another stage of its voyage to the sea, but still it fulfilled, and more, all the expectations I had formed.

Below my feet the river's bank went sheer down for nearly fifty feet; the river itself was a mighty expanse of water flowing swift and clear, with just the top of an island showing, and far away on the other side the bank rose fully as high again, lined with row upon row of tall palms, looking like small shrubs in the distance. On the left, the river took a wide bend to the west, and on the right, another sweeping bend to the east, and in front the great gaunt hills rolled down to meet the river at either bend. This was the very apex of Siam. North lay British territory, the Southern Shan States, and to the East.

across the blue expanse, were the Lao States, which are now French soil. What a magnificent boundary to have for one's country! In full flood it must be a still more thrilling sight, but it is only in September or October, when the rains are nearly over and the northern rivers are beginning to rise, that one can see the river at its height. Once in about twenty years the Mêkhông overflows its banks, and when one thinks of their height and of the breadth of the river, the volume of water must be prodigious.

I stood and took my fill of gazing until it grew dusk, and then returned to the tents which had been pitched on a stretch of level green sward under a spreading tree.

Chieng Sên is a mysterious old city, surrounded by a high, thick, strong wall with palisades on top of the brick, and deep trenches dug outside. How far the wall extends, and what area it embraces, it is difficult to say. The whole city is now so overgrown with plantations of teak, and thick secondary growth, that one cannot see more than twenty yards ahead, except on the main grassy track; but it must be of wide extent, for the District Officer told me that there are actually now tiger and other game living within the walls, and that he had recently fired several shots at a rhinoceros.

This city has a special place all to itself in the history of Siam, for it was originally a Lăwā stronghold, and must have been one of the first, if not the very first, city in Siam, to fall into Tai hands during their migrations southward. Quite conceivably it may have been the settling-place of the Tai Prince Brahma when he crossed the Mêkhông in the second half of the ninth century, which has been referred to in Chapter II. However this may be, the first actual mention of Chieng Sên occurs about the middle of the eleventh century, when it is recorded that the Lăwā had set up an independent Kingdom there under a King called Chakkaraja, who had many successors until the thirteenth century, when the Tai became too strong for the Lăwā, and drove them into the hills. At that time the State of Chieng Sên was known as Ngôn Yāng, and remained still independent, though under Tai rule. The famous Phya Meng Rai, who founded Chiangmai, originally succeeded his father as Prince of Chieng Sên about 1260 A.D., but left it to found his capital at Chieng Rai, which he named after himself. Chiangmai itself was founded much later, in 1296. When his grandson, Sên Phū, came to the throne in 1327, he left Chiangmai and re-occupied Chieng Sên, which he made his capital once more; and his son, Khăm Fū, followed his example. But Phā Yū,

IVORY FIGURE
DEPICTING
BUDDHA WITH
BEGGING BOWL.



*both carved
in Lamphāng*



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the son of Khăm Fū, who succeeded to the throne in 1345, only stayed in Chieng Sên until 1350, when he removed definitely to Chiengmai, and Chieng Sên was never the capital city again.

Apparently the former Princes of Chieng Sên had been in the habit of paying tribute to the Hô of Yunnan in Southern China, for in 1422, the King of Chiengmai having refused to acknowledge this overlordship any longer, the Prince of the Hô marched on Chieng Sên to reduce it. But he was repulsed not only then, but again later in 1425, and from that time Chieng Sên remained absolutely free of Yunnan. After this, the theatre of war was transferred to the south, where the question of supremacy was being discussed between the Kings of Ayudhya and Chiengmai, and Chieng Sên was left in peace until the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Burmese domination began.

In 1545 after the assassination of Phra Ket Klao, the King of Chiengmai, a conclave of Governors was held at Chieng Sên, and an embassy was sent to Luang Prabāng to invite the King of that country to send his son to reign over 'Lān Nā Tai,' and the invitation was accepted; but after the latter's return to Luang Prabāng on his father's death in 1548, civil war broke out, and the country fell into chaos and confusion until in 1558 Chiengmai and the whole Kingdom was so weakened that it fell into Burmese hands without a struggle. In those hands Chieng Sên remained, with intermittent attacks by the Siamese from the South, until the shadows began to fall across the path of Burma, and the days of its glory were being numbered. Being far distant from the centre of affairs, Chieng Sên was one of the last cities to fall, and it was not until 1804 that the Lao succeeded in driving out the Burmese. It is said by some that the 'white-bellied' Lao (i.e. non-tattooed) of Lūang Prabāng and Wiang Chăn, now in French territory, joined forces with the 'black-bellied' Lao of Chiengmai and the other Northern States for this purpose, but Chiengmai claims that she accomplished the feat alone, and with only fifteen hundred men. Whether this is literally true or not, the deed was done, and the Burmese were driven from Old Chieng Sên; those who were not slain in battle, or who found no means of escape, were taken captive and afterwards allowed to settle on the Chiengmai plains, where their descendants till the ground to-day, with but little thought of their Burmese ancestry or of the stirring times in which their fathers lived and fought. So Old Chieng Sên became Lao once again, but, unlike its sister cities of Nān, Chieng Rai, and Phrê, it remained a desolate waste, and no serious attempt appears to have been made to re-establish the city until the

seventies of the last century. Towards the end of the eighth decade the place was becoming a meeting-ground for all robbers and lawless men; and in 1878 the Siamese Government, after consultation with the local Princes, decided to make a fresh attempt to restore the ancient city, and to try and bring back its old vaunted prosperity. It was finally agreed to send 1000 people from Chiengmai, 1000 from Lampāng and 500 from Lamphūn, all descendants of captives taken in the war at the beginning of the century. The attempt did not succeed, however, and an old man, blind and almost bed-ridden, gave me a graphic description of the hardships which those settlers had to face. He told me that he was the last survivor of the original band, the remainder having died or returned disheartened, for rice was dreadfully scarce and other provisions, such as chickens and fruit, were almost unobtainable. Two temples had been restored, the one on the river's bank, and the other a little distance inland, near the Deputy Amphur's office and house, and there was also a small gendarmerie station established. These sufficed for the needs of the present population, which only numbered seventy. Even this number is dwindling, for now that the people are so few, they fear the beasts that haunt the jungles surrounding their lonely homes, and every year sees the migration of some to New Chieng Sên, where a thriving centre is growing up, lying as it does on the main road to Chieng Tūng and the Shan States. It is sad to contemplate a great city, which once contained seventy-five temples, deserted by all, and even its ruins lost in the jungle; but Old Chieng Sên has little hopes of recovery now, for it lies off the main road, and the cost of clearing the plantations and undergrowths of brush-wood which now choke the city would be too great to repay the undertaking. How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished! So the old city sleeps, a prey to the wild beast of the jungle and those craftier two-legged animals, who come to seek what they can find among the ruins which lie to hand. For myself, I visited some ten of the temples, indeed all those which I could find among the dense growth, and it was interesting to observe that in the precincts of the larger temples, near by the main track, plantations of teak had grown up completely enclosing the ruins; in many cases the trees grew inside the halls or even from the altars of the temple itself where such remained.

As we had only two or three days at our disposal for exploring, early in the morning after our arrival we left our tents and plunged straight into the thickets at the back of the camp.

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We had cut our way for about fifty yards, when I saw the bulk of a pagoda rising out of the bushes, and, as we approached the hall of the temple, one of the men on my left called out to me that he had come upon a very peculiar sight. Lying in a kind of ring, and so cunningly surrounded by bushes that one might pass ten yards to the right or left without noticing them, were tens upon tens of images of the Buddha, moulded in bronze or carved in stone, of every size and in every posture; and except for those huge ones which we could not even move, there was not a single image that was whole. Some were headless, others armless, and others chipped and broken almost beyond recognition. It appears that, not only from the grounds of this temple but from many of the others, hundreds of images have been taken down to Bangkok in boats during the past twenty years, so that it was perhaps not surprising that we found no whole ones. Still there was plenty of material to examine, and I spent a profitable hour in studying the various types of face, and in considering where on earth the mines could be which yielded all the metal needed for the compounding of the images. Even the two temples in use near the river, which stand on the sites of former ones, were full of images, quite apart from those restored or latterly made. Behind the high image on the altar they stood in serried rows, packed like soldiers, and all green with dirt, and mould, and age. It left one amazed to think of the almost countless number which must have been made, and chiefly by the Lao, too, for old images of Burmese type are rare in the North of Siam.

Presently we left the council of broken Buddhas and cut our path through the tangled growths in the direction of the city-gate, until we came upon an old ruin of a temple built on a mound—just the floor of the hall remaining with a portion of the wall around. It must have been a very small, perhaps a private, chapel, for not more than fifteen people could possibly have knelt in it; or perhaps it was used as a mausoleum. We commenced to dig with crowbar and spade, and there at the outset a piece of good fortune befell us, for we soon unearthed a small Buddha, not more than seven inches high. The stand was partly broken, and the image, though intact, was black with age, but there was something attractive about the fashioning of the face and the body, and so we decided to put it into our basket for further inspection later on. When we returned to camp and a part of the oxidisation had been removed, we discovered that the Buddha was made of solid silver. It stands before me as I write, on an ebony plinth, its limbs scarred and

marked with age and stress of weather, a rare memorial of a bygone civilization.

Though we dug for some time we found nothing more in that ruined hall, so we continued our way through the jungle, now through the bushes, now along some bridle-track already made, until we suddenly saw, looming in the distance and standing within a plantation of shady teak, a huge pagoda, in good preservation, with several smaller ones adjoining it; at its front the ruins of the temple hall. I think that this temple must have been the largest and most important of all within the city, for it had been built in a prominent position, within easy reach of the main central road, and not too far from the river. Pagoda and temple were built of red brick, as indeed were all the temples that I saw in Old Chieng Sên; the great pillars supporting the roof of the worship hall were cased in cement, but they had long since fallen from their high position, and were lying mournfully crosswise on the floor; the roof, which had probably been of wood, had gone, and the walls were now but four or five feet high. At the end of the hall stood the altar and upon it a huge image of the Buddha; lesser figures set up beside it had suffered damage and loss of limb, but neither storm, nor time, nor the hand of man had made any impression upon that gigantic form, now forsaken for a hundred years, but once in its dignity acknowledged and venerated by hosts of men. No more will the votaries silently and reverently lay their offerings and light their candles before it; no more will travellers rest beneath its protecting shade. Still it remains in silent majesty and imperturbable contemplation, a witness to the Four Great Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

Near by the pagoda was the form of one of the Buddha's disciples, built of brick and cement, some ten feet high upon its pedestal, but with much of the plaster broken and disfigured from exposure to the rain and wind. It is called 'Mahā Kāchai,' or 'Sān Kāchai,' and represents the disciple with a squat body and distended belly. The head is set very low on the shoulders; the form is neither stately nor pleasing to the eye; and its contemplation certainly leaves behind rather incongruous thoughts in one's mind. But there is a reason for this form, and this is the story of Mahā Kāchai.

In the ages long ago, when first he became a disciple of the Teacher, he was of a wondrous beauty of form and countenance, of a pureness almost to rival Gautama himself, so that all maidens who saw him desired him as their husband, and crowds followed him daily. Then the disciple wondered within himself whether



ANCIENT SILVER BUDDHA DUG UP BY THE AUTHOR AT CHIENG SÊN

the people followed him because of his teaching, to learn the way of life, or, as he feared, because of his comeliness and pleasant bearing. So he gave them a test—and this he did by retiring to a wood hard by, and later returning amongst them with cheeks puffed out, belly distended and head bowed between his shoulders. When the people and maidens saw him, with one accord they ran from him and followed him no more. Thus his fears were realised, and so great was his sorrow that he has retained this unpleasant shape ever since. He is still, however, much revered by women for the help he gives them in travail of child-birth; and the people of the North say that he hath much learning in his belly.

The forms of the Buddha which are usually met with in the North are four.

First, there is the normal attitude called 'Phră Sădüng Măn' (Māra), which I have referred to in the Chapter on Customs, where the Buddha sits with one leg above the other, his right hand on his knee.

Secondly, there is the 'Kātsāmātpet,' where the legs are actually crossed and the soles of the feet are both uppermost; the hands are in the same posture as in the normal form.

Thirdly, there is the 'Sāmāti,' where the palms of the hands both lie in the Buddha's lap, the one above the other; the legs are usually in the normal attitude, but they may also be found in the Kātsāmātpet form. Of this form there is a variety called 'Sāmātpet,' where the strip of the priest's yellow robe, which in all other forms continues down the front of the body till it almost touches the hand in the lap, stops short half way.

Fourthly, there is the standing Buddha. Besides these, there are of course many other forms, or rather attitudes of the Buddha, which illustrate his life on earth, but they are rarely seen in Northern temples. An illustration of this is the attitude called 'Sāmpao,' where the Buddha is represented seated on a boat-shaped plinth. This form tradition associates peculiarly with Chieng Sên, for it is said to recall his crossing of the Mē-không from what is now French territory into Siam. This is, of course, purely legendary, as Gautama never visited Siam.

All the forms of the Buddha recounted above, with the exception of the normal form, are becoming more and more difficult to find in the North of Siam as the years go by, at least of genuine ancient mould; but forgeries abound, and one must beware of giving the extortionate sums which are demanded for spurious images of rare form, recently made by rogues of fertile mind, cunningly disfigured and finally buried in the earth for a time

to impart that look of antiquity which is so essential a quality in the true form.

We searched and pried among the ruins all the morning, but it was obvious to see that other hands and eyes had been before us, and although we unearthed some curious copper relics and an old earthen lamp, no great success rewarded our efforts, and at length we desisted and returned to camp.

That evening I received a visit from two 'Mê Tao,' as the garrulous old ladies of this country are called, with silver and bronze ware for sale. Plain silver betel-boxes, a small egg-shaped silver box used as a relique-holder to be deposited under some pagoda, bracelets of heavy twisted silver, old silver 'bullet' ticals of the Ayudhya period of Siamese history, little bronze Shan and Burmese weights in many shapes and forms (elephants, mythical lions, hens, ducks, dogs, and horses), pottery, and precious stones of doubtful value—all were brought for my inspection and delight. One old lady smoked a long pipe, and gave words of encouragement to the other, perhaps a few years younger—when she thought her companion was appraising their wares too cheaply. So a quiet hour or more was passed in the cool of the evening, I sitting before the door of my tent, and they squatting on the ground with their wares laid out on the grass in front of them—both in the 'sîn' and short jackets which had seen better days, and with their scrap of remaining hair twisted in a 'bun' behind—contentedly chewing the everlasting betel. Their manner of dealing is a study in itself. With a shrug of the shoulders I would pick up a pair of silver bracelets and casually enquire the weight and the price. Out would come the native scales, which have only one pan with a weight on a scale-arm, and the silver having been weighed, some cogitation would follow, and finally a figure would be named. At this I would laugh, and, after offering them a third of the amount named, would throw down the bracelets and pick up some other object. So the bargaining would continue until at last a little heap had been made of all the articles I was willing to buy. I would then offer one comprehensive bid for the whole, and after a little more argument on their part, and a little more nonchalance on mine, the purchase would be effected, and the ladies depart, gratefully—let us hope, each side no doubt convinced that the other had the worst of the bargain. But everything would be conducted in the best of humours, with much cackling and squeaks of senile laughter, and many an otherwise tedious hour can be whiled away in bargaining with aged 'Mê Tao,' even if one has little inclination to buy.

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I have said that the interior of the city was infested with tigers and other wild beasts, and, though they suffered no harm, the elephants evidently felt their presence, for they trumpeted the whole night through for fear and company, and made sleep on our part almost impossible; so the next morning we were up betimes, and soon after daylight set out again with spades and bars to visit the temple set on a hill outside the city wall, whose spire we noticed on entering Chieng Sên. Crossing the main road, and following a narrow track through the woods, we came at length to an opening in the city wall on the west side. Passing through this gap, we found ourselves on a narrow path, raised somewhat above the level of the fields on either side, in which the jungle-grass stood six feet high. Outside the wall, we had a splendid view of its length in a southerly direction, of the deep trench in front, the brick wall rising thirty feet above it and, on the top of the wall, a palisade of stakes—the whole now overgrown with clinging creepers, but still in excellent repair. A shower of rain had laid the dust on the path, and we had not gone very far before I saw the pugs of a tiger, freshly made and clearly marked in the mud—a large beast, too, for the imprint of its paw, from tip to tip, measured just a full span across; there was the mark of a cub alongside the parent, and several of the men looked askance at one another, but we passed on and the path told no more tales. Yet it was an eerie feeling to walk on a path between fields of tall grass and think that a pair of glittering eyes might be watching one's movements from a distance of fifteen yards. We saw and heard nothing, however, and half-an-hour's walk brought us to the foot of a steep flight of steps, nearly a quarter of a mile in length, leading up to the temple on the summit. About a third of the way up, we came across the remains of a temple on the left-hand side, prettily hidden among the trees. Several broken images stuck up on the ledges of the walls around clearly showed that the temple had long since been rifled, but I entered and examined the decorations on the entrance, rough mythical figures moulded in plaster and cement, and so brittle that it was impossible to find a piece large enough to show the tracery.

Leaving the temple, we went straight on up the broad brick steps with a parapet on either side, until we reached the top and the entrance to the main temple. The hall itself had disappeared entirely, and all that remained were a part of the cloisters and the pagoda in the centre. This pagoda is still in use and pilgrims come regularly to lay their offerings at certain festivals, but all was silent and deserted when I visited the spot, and,

except that the precincts were not so overgrown and unkempt as in the other ruins, there was nothing to show that it had received any human visit for years past. While digging in different places we had unearthed a number of round, concave, copper discs, some with a flat rim, and some, rather larger, without a rim at all. It puzzled us considerably to know what these discs had been used for, until we came to the pagoda on the hill, and saw a number of these copper discs stuck high up at intervals all around it, which, as they caught the glint of the sun, shone like gold. Round the base of the pagoda was a good deal of plaster-work, figures of animals moulded in cement, the frame octagonal and the background soft and brittle, but the animal itself of much better cement and standing out in bold relief. Most of the figures were, however, chipped, if not entirely disfigured, and there was nothing very artistic about them. The view from the parapet was obscured entirely by foliage, and the visit on the whole was disappointing. So we returned to the city earlier than we had intended. Before going back to the camp I went into one of the temples at present in use, and entered into conversation with the priests there. They were all young and knew nothing about the history of the city, but one of them showed me tiny forms of the Buddha, moulded in lead and quite flat, called 'Phra Phim,' and also a copy of what is known as 'Sao-pêt' (i.e. in Lao, twenty-eight), an arched tablet of lead on which are shaped twenty-eight forms of the Buddha, five rows of five and one of three; these were in common use in former times as votive tablets, but are seldom seen now.

As I only remained in Old Chiang Sên for two or three days, I could not expect to carry out any serious research, but I am confident that, with two months' leisure and a picked band of men, a visit to the old city would well repay the efforts of any archaeologist. It is curious that, although China, Japan, Indo-China, and the other countries of the Far East seem to possess endless attractions for the European explorer, naturalist and archaeologist, the north and centre of Siam never seem to appear to them worthy of a visit. Perhaps it is overshadowed by its great neighbours, or can it be that antiquarians think that there is nothing of interest in Siam to merit their attention? Fortunately, an archaeological service has now been established by a decree of His Majesty the King, and although funds will necessarily be limited, still the work of preserving and exploring the ancient cities of Siam will henceforward receive some official attention.

Just one more look at the Mêkhông flowing swiftly by and

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then farewell. We left Chieng Sên the next morning as soon as it was light, and just as the diminutive market was forming by the roadside. We passed through the city's three-fold gate and walked along the bank of the Mê Khăm until we came to a narrow bridge. Having safely crossed, back we went for an hour and a half down the jungle track between the fields of high yellow grass, so laden with dew at that hour of the morning and hanging so close that, by the time we emerged from the jungle into the forest again, our clothes were wet through and sodden as if with heavy rain. There is no necessity to give any account of our return journey to New Chieng Sên, since we arrived without incident or mishap. I have spoken of the new hamlets, which were springing up near New Chieng Sên, and apparently some of these were being peopled by emigrants from Lamphūn near Chiengmai, for I passed a young countryman, who told me that he had built a house in one of these hamlets and was then going to fetch his parents from Lamphūn, and he added that he was but one of many from the same district.

The new city, as surveyed from the rest-house, consisted of a large gendarmerie-station, the Amphur's house and office, and rows of native bamboo houses and shops scattered along the roadside; all lying on the road to Old Chieng Sên, and not on the main road north, which branched off some little distance before. The actual village itself was somewhat removed from the road, on the banks of the Huey Mê Ki.

That afternoon, from the rest-house, I saw an unexpected sight in the gendarmerie station opposite, namely, a young recruit, clad in a running vest and knickers, with a pink sash and spiked shoes, solemnly practising the high jump on the plot of ground in front. The uprights, the willow wand, even the pegs were all there, and though he was alone, the performance continued for more than half-an-hour, during which the youth strove, with the utmost patience, to improve upon his previous attempts. His final jump was a credit to himself and his perseverance. This was 'New Siam,' and I daresay he had just arrived from Bangkok, where now such sports form a feature of the athletic life of many of the schools.

The general appearance of the gendarmerie station was peculiar, for the whole building stood at a distinct angle from the ground, and this apparently was due to the immense force of the winds which sweep across the surrounding valley. During April, the month in which these 'simoom blasts' (for they are hot indeed) attain their greatest vigour, it is sometimes feared that the building will be transported bodily away; but it has now

stood the brunt of a good many seasons' attack, and should present a brave front for many a year yet.

I should think New Chieng Sên to be rather an important gendarmerie post, for it is the last Siamese station of any size on the main caravan road to Chieng Tŭng and the Shan States, and the border is always a fruitful field for the dacoit and the cattle-raider, as all who know the history of the Tweed will readily agree; it opens up, too, an easy means of escape to those who live by the road. It must be exciting work pursuing Shan dacoits, for if their guns are antiquated, their knives are sharp and their spirit indomitable.

We left New Chieng Sên the next morning before it was light, and passing under the shadow of the high forest-clad hills on our right, continued our way back to Chieng Rai. We pushed forward as fast as we could, for the road was long, but it was late before we drew up on the banks of the Mê Khôk once more and hailed a boatman on the opposite shore to pole his long and narrow craft across. In the meantime the elephants were unloaded and with splashing and trumpeting urged into the river. They just managed to keep their foreheads and eyes out of the water, and a short struggle brought them safely to the shallows on the further bank. It was delightful to watch them standing in a line flapping their tails and ears, and with their great black bodies glistening in the sunlight. Two or three voyages of the boat brought us and our baggage across, and another twenty minutes found us back again in the old battered bamboo house we had made our temporary home in Chieng Rai.

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That night I was restless, and could not sleep. The mystery of old Chieng Sên—the city buried in the forest—still haunted me, as it does even to-day. Long lines of women, priests, soldiers, peasants, and princes, kept passing before me—whispering their history from the depths of the jungle; so, after a short ineffectual attempt at sleep, I called up our teller of tales and begged him to help me compose my thoughts and damp the fires of my imagination. In his quiet, gentle way, he began at once and told me



LARGE COW-BELL WITH CARVED WOODEN FRAME.
(In the possession of the author's wife.)

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THE STORY OF 'LAZYBONES' AND HOW HE SUCCEEDED IN LIFE

Once upon a time there was a boy who was very lazy. He refused to do any work at all, but just lived with his father and mother idling his time away. At last his father and mother could stand it no longer, so they drove him out of the house and sent him to live with the 'Kămnăn'.¹

The 'Kămnăn' agreed to give him board and lodging, but said to the boy, "In return for this you must look after my buffaloes for me." Lazybones said he would do so, but, though he ate and slept at the 'Kămnăn's' house every day, he never looked after the buffaloes at all.

Then the 'Kămnăn' became angry and said, "You are an idle, lazy fellow, and I refuse to keep you any longer—go and live in the jungle by yourself." So Lazybones was chased away by the 'Kămnăn,' and went to live in a tiny hut in the jungle all by himself.

But the 'Kămnăn' reported the matter to the King, and when he had heard the story, the King said "This is a pestilent, worthless rascal—he would be much better dead, but I will try him first myself before killing him." So he sent a messenger to Lazybones with an order that he should bring him the body of a deer on the morrow, otherwise he would be executed without fail or delay. This made Lazybones very frightened, so off he set to try and find a deer. As he journeyed through the forest, he saw the tusk of an elephant lying on the path, so he picked it up and carried it home. Then off he set again, and when he had travelled a great distance he saw the body of a deer lying before him. So he hoisted it on to his shoulders and joyfully bore it to the King. The King was pleased that Lazybones had carried out his commands, and forbore to kill him. So Lazybones went back home, but when he got there, there was nothing for him to eat. So he went into the forest again and picked quantities of green leaves of the 'miang' tree, which he took and sold in the countryside. By this means he was able to buy some food, and it seemed such an easy way of living that he went out every day gathering leaves for sale. But, to his astonishment, every day when he came back home from the market, he found his curry and rice all set ready for him to eat. He could not understand this at all, and wondered who it was that prepared his meals for him in such a mysterious way. So he said to himself, "To-day I will only pretend to go to the market, and hide and watch who comes into my hut."

¹ 'Kămnăn' is the Commune headman.

So he hid just outside the hut, and as he lay and watched, he saw a beautiful girl come out of the ivory tusk, which he had brought home, and set to work to prepare his curry for him. When Lazybones saw how beautiful she was, he named her 'Jewel of the Tusk' on the spot, and there and then ran into the hut and clasped her in his arms.

The damsel at once cried out, "What are you going to do to me?" Then Lazybones fell at her feet, saying, "I thought you would go back into the tusk again, and I want you to be my wife." The maiden answered, saying, "No, I will not go back into the tusk again; I will stay with you and become your wife, as you wish." So they lived together in the forest as husband and wife, but presently the King was brought news of the beautiful wife that Lazybones had found, and at once coveted her. So he sent another messenger with the order that Lazybones should bring him seven blooms of the 'Chāng Tī' flower, or he would suffer the same fate as awaited him before.

Lazybones fell into a panic of terror, for he had never heard of such a flower, and did not know where to find even one such bloom. He sat all day in a state of gloomy silence; he would not speak or eat, and when his wife noticed this, she said to him, "Why is my husband so sorrowful? He will not speak or eat. Does his heart desire something? If so, let him speak, and perhaps I can help him."

Then Lazybones told her the whole story, how the King had commanded him to find and bring him seven blooms of the 'Chāng Tī' flower, on pain of instant death if he failed. 'Jewel of the Tusk' answered him that no one had ever heard of this flower, and that the only thing to do was for him to go and ask the guardian of the temple. From the hut to the temple on the mountain was eleven days' travel. So off he set, as his wife had told him, and meanwhile the maiden went back into the tusk again to await his return.

After eleven days' and nights' arduous travelling Lazybones reached the temple and found the guardian. The guardian asked him solemnly "What is your business here?" Then Lazybones answered, "The King has ordered me to find and bring him seven blooms of the 'Chāng Tī' flower. Do you know where it is to be found?" The guardian replied, "Although I have lived for one hundred years, yet I have never seen this flower. But go and ask the guardian of the temple to the north. He is now two hundred years old and will surely know."

So off went Lazybones to the second temple, and found the guardian awaiting him as before. He asked the same question,

saying, "The King has ordered me to bring him seven blooms of the 'Chang Tî' flower. Do you know where it is to be found?" And the guardian replied, "Although I have lived for two hundred years, yet I have never seen this flower. But go and seek out the guardian of the temple to the north. He is now three hundred years old and will surely know."

So off went Lazybones to the third temple, only to meet with the same reply to his question from the guardian there, who said, "Although I have lived for three hundred years, yet I have never seen this flower. But go and seek the guardian of the temple to the north. He is now four hundred years old and will surely know."

So off went Lazybones on his hopeless quest, only to be given the same reply once more by the guardian of the fourth temple, who said, "Although I have lived for four hundred years, yet I have never seen this flower. But go and seek the guardian of the temple to the north. He is now five hundred years old, and will surely know."

So off went Lazybones, dazed and tired, but with the picture of his fate still goading him on, to seek out the guardian of the fifth and last temple. But the guardian, when he heard the question, shook his head like the others and said, "I have lived for five hundred years, and in my garden there is every kind of flower in the world. But there is no 'Chang Tî' bloom among them, and I have never heard tell of such a flower."

When he heard these words, a shiver of terror passed through Lazybones' frame as he thought of the King's terrible threat.

So he went out of the temple and sat down on the banks of a pool near by, gloomily wondering what next he should do.

As he sat there, by chance he looked up and saw the seven beautiful daughters of Phya In coming down to the pool to bathe, and before they went into the water they removed their wings and tails and placed them on the bank. When he saw the maidens safely in the water, Lazybones was struck by an idea, so he gathered up all the wings and tails and hid them. As soon as the maidens had finished bathing, they went straight to the spot where they had placed their wings and tails, but, alas, found nothing there! Nothing at all did they see but Lazybones sitting on the bank by himself, idly watching them. So guessing that he had hidden them, they all came up to him and begged that he would give them back their wings and tails.

Then Lazybones said, "Yes, I will give them back to you, but only on one condition, that you bring me now seven blooms of the 'Chang Tî' flower." The maidens begged that he would

give them back their wings and tails first of all, but Lazybones said, "No; if I do, you will fly away—I shall never see my 'Chāng Tī' blooms." Then the maidens said, "If you don't believe us, take this bow and quiver of arrows, and whenever you shoot one of these arrows into the air, we must all descend to earth again." So Lazybones took the bow and quiver of arrows, and the daughters of Phya In, having received back their wings and tails, flew away up into the sky. When they had been away for about half-an-hour, Lazybones grew anxious, so he took out an arrow and shot it into the air. At once all seven returned to earth, but said to Lazybones, "It is too early. We had not reached the garden where the 'Chāng Tī' blossoms grow." Then up they flew again on high, and when they had been lost from sight for an hour, Lazybones once more drew an arrow from his quiver and shot it into the air. At once the seven maidens stood before him, saying, "You must not be so impatient; we had not reached the garden yet." So he let them go again, and this time waited for hours and hours. At last he could endure it no longer, so loosed his third arrow. At once the seven daughters of Phya In appeared, but this time each was holding a blossom of the 'Chāng Tī' flower in her hand, and when they had presented to Lazybones all the blooms, they said, "Now give us back our bow and arrows; our task is done." But Lazybones said, "No, wait until I get home; then I will give you back the bow and arrows." To this they agreed and flew away back to Heaven.

Then Lazybones gathered up his blooms and bow and arrows, and set out on his long journey home.

When he came to the guardian of the temple who was five hundred years old, the old man greeted him courteously, and asked him, "Well, have you found the 'Chāng Tī' blooms?"

Lazybones replied, "Yes, and I have been give a very strange present besides. If you would like to see it, come outside and I will show you." So the old man came outside the temple and Lazybones took an arrow and shot it into the air. At once the daughters of Phya In appeared and asked him to give them their bow and arrows back. But Lazybones said, "No, wait till I reach home."

When the guardian saw the bow, he admired it very much and asked Lazybones if he would exchange it for a certain drum in his possession, saying, "The drum is a magic one, for it can steal anything, at any time, in any place."

So Lazybones agreed and made the exchange; but as soon as he had received the drum, he whispered to it to go and steal the

bow back again. In this way Lazybones obtained possession of both the drum and the bow, and off he went once more until he reached the guardian of the temple, who was four hundred years old. To him, too, he showed the bow and brought the seven maidens to earth; and the old man admired it and offered a stick in exchange. The stick was a magic one, for it could beat any person of itself. So Lazybones exchanged his bow for the stick, and then sent the drum to steal the bow back again. On he journeyed until he reached the guardian of the third temple. Here again he showed the bow and summoned the daughters of Phya In before him; and the old man admired the bow, and offered a thick rope in exchange. The rope was a magic one, for it could bind any person of itself. So Lazybones exchanged the bow for the rope and then sent the drum to steal the bow back again.

Again, with the guardian who was two hundred years old he exchanged the bow for a magic pole, which could carry baskets of itself, and sent the drum to steal the bow.

And finally, with the guardian of the first temple, he exchanged the bow for a large metal pot full of household goods, and then sent the drum to steal the bow back again.

When he had left the temples all behind, he ordered the pole to carry all his goods, and thus came back happily home, with the seven blossoms in his hand.

As soon as his wife saw him she came out of the ivory tusk, but he, without waiting to embrace her, said, "I have brought back seven other wives; would you like to see them? If you will come outside, I will shoot an arrow and they will appear."

When Phya In heard this, he said to his daughters, "If Lazybones summons you now, you must take down presents with you, for he is going to take you all to wife."

Then Lazybones shot his arrow, and all seven maidens flew to earth, bearing gifts; and Lazybones took them as his wives.

Soon afterwards, Lazybones gathered up his 'Chāng Tī' blossoms once more and went to the King and presented them. The King was perplexed and sore at heart, for he could not guess where Lazybones had obtained them; and when he heard that Lazybones had seven other wives, more beautiful than ever, he grew more angry and more covetous still. So he summoned all his people and set out to capture and snatch away all the wives from Lazybones' house.

But Lazybones had heard of his coming, and told all his wives to hide in the metal pot. So when the King came, he could find no wives at all. Then Lazybones sent the stick to beat the

King, the rope to bind him and the pole to bear him away as his prisoner.

Then the King confessed himself beaten, and gave up his Kingdom to Lazybones to 'eat.'

Thus Lazybones became King and lived happily ever after with his eight beautiful wives.

This is the end of the tale of 'Lazybones,' as handed down by ancient tradition.



PAIR OF COW-BELLS IN ELABORATE FRAME.

(Above) ANOTHER PAIR OF COW-BELLS, WITH LEATHER STRAPS. (Below)
BAMBOO COW-BELL WITH CLAPPERS. (*In the possession of the
author's wife.*)

CHAPTER XIII

From Chieng Rai to Phayão

WE stayed in Chieng Rai for two nights, to give a short but well-earned rest both to animals and men after a rather strenuous week, and then set out towards the south and home.

Two miles out of Chieng Rai we came to the forked roads, the one leading south-east to Chieng Khăm, by which we had come, and the other due south to Phayao, with a sign-board stating the distance to the latter to be the equivalent of sixty-five miles. We had not gone far along the Phayao road when we were startled by the tramp of feet and the clank of chains and arms, and, turning a village corner, we came on a party of gendarmes leading a number of picturesque ruffians to Chieng Rai and captivity. I learnt from the sergeant in charge of the party that the captives, who were of the Meao tribe, had been surprised in the act of smuggling illicit opium. The Meao were driving pack-mules and, as soon as they caught sight of the gendarmes, had immediately opened fire. The latter replied, and a skirmish took place, in the course of which two Meao and one gendarme were wounded; but numbers eventually had their effect, and most of the Meao were overpowered and captured, together with the opium. A few had escaped and a search party was still out scouring the countryside. They looked hardy rogues enough, and the sergeant told me that opium smugglers always resisted arrest, and never scrupled to open fire directly they were surprised. They were dressed very much like the Yao, whom I have described in a previous chapter. They are, indeed, a kindred race of Chinese origin, but inhabit the mountains on the Chiengmai side, whereas the Yao are mostly found on the hills to the east of Chieng Khăm and the north of Năn. The cultivation of the opium poppy, as well as the manufacture of the drug, is prohibited by the Government, with whom the sale is a monopoly, but the small scattered tribes living among the remote mountains still pursue their time-honoured habits, and although it is, as a rule, dangerous and profitless work for the gendarmes to attack the tribes in their own fastnesses, still captures are occasionally made, as in the present case, when the poppy is brought down for sale.

As we passed through village after village, it appeared that most of these were newly built, and that considerable emigration to this district was taking place from Phrê. In the district between Chieng Rai and Phayao the harvests are, as a rule, exceptionally good, although occasionally the land suffers in parts from overfloodings of the Mê Lao, and serious damage is done to the rice-crop. But the harvests at Phrê are abnormally poor in general, and the emigrants were making a very favourable exchange of venue.

We pitched our tents at the end of the first day's march by the banks of the Mê Lao; and hard by we found encamped on the sandy banks of the river a party of Shans, who had evidently preceded us from Chieng Rai, and were going down to Lampāng with a pack of sturgeons' eggs, 1500 lbs. in weight, brought from Luang Prabāng on the French side of the Mêkhōng. The eggs were not whole, but had been already mixed with chillies and other ingredients into a kind of red caviare, which is considered a great delicacy. I tasted this caviare in Nān, eating it with 'Khao Nio,' the cakes of boiled glutinous rice which here take the place of bread, and found it attractive, rather like eating a well-cooked partridge. The fish, which is called 'Pla Beuk,' is caught at certain seasons of the year in the Mêkhōng and is called the Eastern Sturgeon, on account of its size and the caviare it produces. I have already mentioned the fact that there is a record of its having been caught in the Mê Khōk some two hundred years ago.

The road from Mê Lao to Müang Pān was a pretty one, mostly through shady woods, and short compared with our previous day's march. At Müang Pān we took shelter in the school-house, since the 'Sālā' was occupied, and found the boys just preparing to go home. There are few children to compare with these of Siam, with their diminutive size up to the age of fifteen, their little round faces and their laughing eyes. They are certainly very attractive, and it is a pity they cannot remain children always, but it may not be, and they grow up into men who lose their attractiveness of appearance, but fortunately retain their cheerfulness of humour.

Müang Pān is now under the jurisdiction of Chieng Rai, but in olden times it was a vassal state of Lamphūn. During the latter part of the eighteenth century the district round Müang Pān was very sparsely populated, and it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that any attempt was made to revive its prosperity by introducing settlers from Lampāng. But these settlers found only a precarious means of

livelihood, and soon withdrew to Phayao and the regions further to the south. About 1840, however, the Chief of Lamphūn sent a new contingent of emigrants to settle in Mūang Pān, and this scheme of colonising was more successful, for by 1880 it had grown to a prosperous neighbourhood where the rice harvests were good, and the other necessities of life, such as vegetables, fowls and pigs, were plentiful and cheap. It was about this time that the attempt was made to re-populate Old Chieng Sēn, and apparently not only were the people of Chieng-mai, Lampāng and Lamphūn sent as colonists, but also a number of the inhabitants of Pān were driven into the new colony. These luckless folk were given very little time to make their preparations, and anything not of a portable nature had to be abandoned. Armed perhaps with a child or a chicken, off they had to set on their fifty mile tramp, leaving their comfortable if rudely built homes for a bare, wild and desolate country inhabited by nothing but beasts. But this is all past history, related to show the ease with which the population shift from one district to another. Mūang Pān itself is still smiling and prosperous, with a large area of rice-fields under the plough and crops which compare favourably with other districts of the north.

From the market-place of Pān could be seen a long range of undulating hills to the west, over which was the road from Chieng Rai to Chiengmai; and to the east another range of hills, not so high, and ending in a flat square plateau. At dusk the sides and base were lost in mist, while the summit stood out clear, with that sharp outline which Eastern mountains take on at sunset. It looked like a billiard table set in the sky.

In a field close by the school-house a group of Hô were encamped, on their way to Phrê with loads of chillies. The Hô are a quaint folk, with their trousers and tunics faced with red and their dark blue skull caps with red buttons. Chinese and yet not Chinese—a sort of link between the Chinaman and the Shan. Sturdy and well set-up, with the prominent cheek-bones of the Mongolian, yet with something indefinite which differentiates them. I think their eyes are wider open and not set so obliquely. They are the mule contractors of the north, for the transport of goods from one town to another; inveterate opium smokers, but still trustworthy. There is a story told, which is worthy of credence, of one who was engaged to carry a large quantity of silver bullion in boxes from one city to another. When he arrived, the amount was found to be one box short of the number entrusted to him; in fact, he reported

to the owner that he had been robbed on the way, but that the latter was not to worry, as the money would be forthcoming later. Sure enough, in two months' time, the Hô arrived with the stolen coin, but he refused to give any detail except that he had traced the robber and recovered the money. History is silent as to the fate of the thief.

From Mûang Pân to Phayao was a distance of some thirty miles, along, for the most part, a straight flat open road set between large and fertile rice plains. Here and there we passed through patches of thin woodland, but otherwise the sun did not cease from troubling and we met few travellers by the way.

At the village of Mê Chai, where we spent the night, we heard of a number of cases of some virulent disease, like small-pox, but it was evidently purely local, for there was no sign of an epidemic in Phayao, nor did I hear later that the disease had spread. Still vaccination had been introduced, and the official Siamese doctors were busy in the neighbouring villages with lance and lymph ready to operate on all who would present themselves. I suppose that one day the Lao will become accustomed to surgical operations, but at present he cannot stomach the thought of having incisions made in his flesh. I once tried to persuade one of my syces, a youth of some eighteen years, who had been suffering from intermittent malaria for several months, to submit to hypodermic injections of quinine, but he could not bear the thought of it, until he had had several doses of liquid quinine. Then he submitted. The cause was not only fear, though that no doubt played its part, but I think that superstition also helped, and he was afraid he might offend some evil-tempered 'Phî.'

The time of year was now February, and it was clear that the hot weather was at hand. The nights still remained refreshingly cool, but the mid-day sun was becoming intolerable, and a sigh of relief escaped from all as we passed the famous temple of Phayao and saw the walls of the city close at hand. Shortly afterwards we passed through the narrow opening in the city wall, which serves as entrance, and a short climb brought us to the Government rest-house.

The city of Phayao is not large—one could walk from one entrance to the other in half an hour or so—and the present town, which is not more than eighty years old, was settled by emigrants from Lampāng about 1840, at the same time as Mûang Pân and the districts further north were re-colonised by the State of Lamphûn.

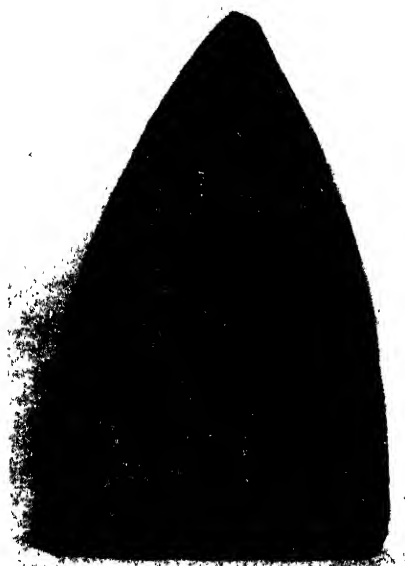
Far back in olden times, in the thirteenth century, Phayao was once an independent State, and its King, Ngăm Mưang, has a niche in history as the friend and counsellor of Meng Rai, whom he helped to choose the site for the town of Chiengmai. He was on terms of equality, too, with the famous Răm Khăm-hêng, the King of Sukhōthai and the father of modern Siam, with whom he studied in his youth, but who later betrayed him by seducing his Queen while on a visit to Phayao. As has already been told, this famous quarrel was composed by the aid of Meng Rai, and the three then swore a pact of solemn friendship together. But those times are far away, and in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when the Burmese domination came to an end, Phayao was deserted, and remained so for over half a century until it was re-populated in 1840, as related above.

Now it is chiefly famous for the great image of the Buddha, which has been erected just outside its northern wall. When this giant image of brick and plaster was actually built, I could not discover, but it has long been an object of veneration among all the peoples of Northern Siam, and is visited by pilgrims from far and near. The city appears to take its present Siamese name from this image, for 'Pha' or 'Phra' signifies 'Buddha,' and 'Yao' is 'long' or 'tall.' On the other hand, the Lao always call the city 'Pănyao'; and I am inclined to think that this must have been its ancient name, for tradition has handed down an imaginative legend, which accounts for its use among the people to-day. As I sat smoking an evening pipe, a venerable 'Phū Tao' (an old gossip) told me that many centuries ago Gautama, the Lord Buddha, once visited Pănyao in person with a train of disciples and, being thirsty one day, sent one of the latter to draw water from the river Mê Ing which flows by the city's wall. The disciple went to the stream as he was bid, but could find no clear water, so thick and muddy was the water which came flowing down. He journeyed up the stream, wondering to see the water all churned to mud, until suddenly he came face to face with a mighty 'Năgă' disporting himself in mid-stream and leisurely taking his bath. Full of fear but yet of courage, he courteously begged the 'Năgă' Prince to cease his pleasures for a time so that pure water might be drawn for his Master. But the 'Năgă' laughed and mocked him, saying that he was a mighty dragon, afraid of no one's Master, and bade him begone before harm befell him. So the disciple returned and anxiously laid the matter before his Master. Then Gautama was wroth, and said that such insolence must be punished; so he caused

himself to rise to an immense stature and, seeking out the 'Nāgā,' changed him into the range of mountains, from four to five thousand feet high, which guards the city to the west. Thus came the name of 'Pānyao' (or 'Pā Nyiao'), which means 'the angry Buddha'; 'Pā' being a corruption of 'Phrā,' and 'Nyiao' an old Lao word, now no longer in use, meaning 'angry.' The idea of the Buddha giving way to one of the passions after his enlightenment is, of course, antagonistic to the spirit of Buddhism, but the peasant reckes little of logic in his philosophy, and says that the great image of the Buddha was set up in commemoration of this event. That same evening, while still light remained, I strolled down the hill towards the southern gate, to a gap in the landscape through which one could see the whole range outlined in the evening glow. The dragon's shape stood out clearly, like the famous Egyptian maiden by the Red Sea shore, and was very lifelike; first, a gigantic head from which was projecting a small retrousseé nose, then a thin and shapely neck, and last a massive body with knees drawn up.

The northern entrance to the town was not more than nine feet wide; and the southern entrance was precisely the same, just a narrow opening in the wall which, built partly of brick and partly of mud, surrounds the city. As we went through the gap, it seemed like entering some mediaeval castle, and one half expected to hear the massive wooden gate banged to behind the last man. It must be extremely hot in Phayao in the real hot weather during April and May; even in mid-February the heat was hard to bear, and grass and fodder were already becoming scarce. The whole town seemed parched to the core, and the wells were far too low for the time of year. This was not, however, an abnormal state, but the natural condition of the town after three months' dry weather, and the people say that the Buddha is still angry and frowns upon them because of his treatment by the dragon.

The population of Phayao and its neighbourhood is chiefly Lao; it is not large, probably not more than fifteen to sixteen thousand, but it is not often that the rice crops fail and the people are happy and prosperous—in their own modest, unambitious way. During the last few years, however, the rice-crops have been very bad and Phayao has fallen on evil times. I was not long in noticing that the girls of Phayao, as of Wiang Sā, were attractive, with supple, well-developed figures, and an excellent carriage, surpassing their Lao sisters in some of the other larger towns.



OLIVE TABLET OF FIRE-CLAY, SHOWING
THE BUDDHA SEATED (LAMPHUN STYLE.)



BRONZE STATUE OF TWO WRESTLERS
(*secular bronze figures are very rare.*)



FIGURE IN GILT LACQUER OF WALKING

There is also, besides the Lao population, a considerable Shan colony settled just outside the southern gate of the city on the banks of the Mê Ing at a suburb called Mê Tăm, and here they live apparently quite self-contained and apart from their Lao neighbours. They have a headman who conducts all their petty local affairs with the officials, such as helping to collect the taxes due and acting as spokesman when any complaint has to be made. The river Mê Ing, which runs close by, flows, after leaving Phayao, east to a spot called Mùang Lô, and then goes north to join the Mêkhông.

The site of Phayao itself as a city is so old that the place teems with lore, and legend, and tales of spirits, angry and appeased. The very birds seem to whisper them in the trees at dusk, and the trees themselves to nudge one another and say, "Ah, if only you knew what we know." If your ears are keen and you can recognise the voices, you may sometimes gather the remnants of some old tale, a word here, another there, just enough to give you the key.

You must know that in every village the husbandman, or more often his wife, mills his own rice, and for this purpose uses a strong wooden lever, which he works with his feet; at the end of the lever is a straight handle-knot, which, as the lever falls, pounds the padi lying in a small round tub. Now this tub, which is only partially hollowed, is almost always made of wood, but there are in Phayao, strange to tell, several shaped in solid stone. How did they come there? No one knows, but the birds say that in very ancient days, when a man and a girl were embarking on the sea of matrimony, and their thoughts were turning towards their household goods, on the night of the marriage they would journey together to a hill to the east of Phayao and would there offer up a small sum of money to the presiding 'phi,' or spirit; and if the 'phi' were pleased to smile upon them, lo, in the morning, when they rose to engage in their morning duties, they would find a stone tub, ready for the pounding of their padi.

On the second day of my stay in Phayao, in the afternoon, I made my pilgrimage to the shrine of the Great Buddha outside the town. It is set back from the road, and stands within its own grounds, enclosed by four low walls. Tradition says that the site on which the image stands, and indeed of the whole town, was once a huge marsh, which was miraculously filled up. The temple itself is said to be of much more recent date than the image it contains, and though not of any great beauty of architecture, is sufficiently picturesque to bear description. As you

enter through the ancient gate, you can see the roof of the temple, which is low in front, sloping upwards towards the back; as you look closer, you see that in reality there are six partitions of roof, all with an upward slope, but each partition raised a little above the preceding one and quite distinct in itself. At the end of the fourth is the curved upward tip which is a particular feature of Siamese and Lao temple architecture; while on each side, sloping downwards from the top, is a series of three other partitions, formed in exactly the same way as those of the main roof. As is very often found in Northern Siam, there are no walls, but a series of supporting pillars on either side, rising from the floor to the roof. On the outside of the temple, where the supporting pillars join the eaves, some curious carving can be seen, moderately well executed and painted in red, and black, and gold. In each case there is a presentation of Hānūmān, the monkey-god, or of one of his attendant monkeys, holding in both hands, in an attitude of contemplation, a lotus-flower, a custard-apple, a pineapple, or a lāmūt.¹ The form of Hānūmān is unnecessarily grotesque, but the fruit are well carved, and the whole scheme is effective from a decorative point of view. Inside the temple I could see the great Buddha looming in the dim light against its background of wall, but I was not able to approach close at first, for I found a large party of pilgrims had arrived from Lampāng, and a host of worshippers were prostrating themselves and laying offerings of candles and flowers before the shrine. Presently the majority of the pilgrims departed, and I was able to examine it, without disturbing their meditations. The image is probably the largest in the North, as it must be at least thirty-five to forty feet high, though it is not the largest in Siam, for the Buddha at Ayudhya is about eighty feet high including its base; but that till recently has been left a ruin, exposed to the four winds of heaven, whereas the Buddha at Phayao has been well cared for and is in splendid preservation. It is built of brick and cement, and is covered with gold leaf, which is sold to pilgrims at the outer gate. The form is conventional and the moulding good, the fingers and feet being well proportioned; and the face of the Teacher shows a most benign expression. A small part of the body was under repair, and a cloth of red and gold had been thrown across the breast, hiding a portion of the left side. The altar on which it rests is of stone and in front of the altar is an iron railing, but this did not prevent each pilgrim sticking his own piece of gold leaf on the image. The reason why the image was situated

¹ An egg-shaped fruit, with a skin of potato colour (*Achras Sapota*, Linn.).

outside the town was because Gautama chose the spot himself, for it was there that a 'Nok Iang,' a certain bird, planted the seed of a tree, which sprang up immediately, to give the Buddha shade from the heat of the sun. The place is called 'Tõn Iang' to this day.

But, apart from the renowned Buddha outside the city of Phayao, there are many temples within the 'Wieng'¹ itself, as at Chieng Sên, built, I was told, mostly during the times when the Burmese were masters in the land. How far this is true, it is impossible to say, so difficult is it to obtain reliable information regarding the age of any object, large or small. A temple, a bowl of pottery, a silver sword, a silk panung—someone will bring you and say, "This is very old, indeed." "Yes," you say, "but how old?" "Oh, I don't know, but it is a very old thing." Even if an object has passed the age of ten years, it often ranks already as 'old,' and I do not think that the peasant mind can grasp the thought of an age greater, say, than seventy-five or a hundred years. I have tested them often and have always found that eighty years represent an immense age. Quite recently I came across an excellent example of this inability to gauge time, and that in a Siamese official of some standing. We were looking at some Chino-Siamese porcelain, and its owner kept on pointing to pieces and saying "that's more than 200 years old"; but, almost in the same breath, would add, "it was made in the third Reign" (i.e. of the Bangkok Dynasty), which lasted from 1824 to 1851! Apparently, facts like the building of temples, which are handed down from father to son, gradually become mingled with the hundred and one legends so much more sympathetic to the peasants' spirit and mind, and are eventually nothing but a faded memory, of no value to the chronicler, or at least to be regarded with great suspicion. It is possible that a good many of the temples were built at the bidding of Burmese masters, for I do not imagine many of the Phayao 'Wât' to be of very ancient origin; but if they were, they were all built in the Lao style, and one could not find much trace of Burmese or any other foreign influence in their architecture. Another point worth recording is that there do not appear to be any traces of Brahminical influence anywhere throughout the North.

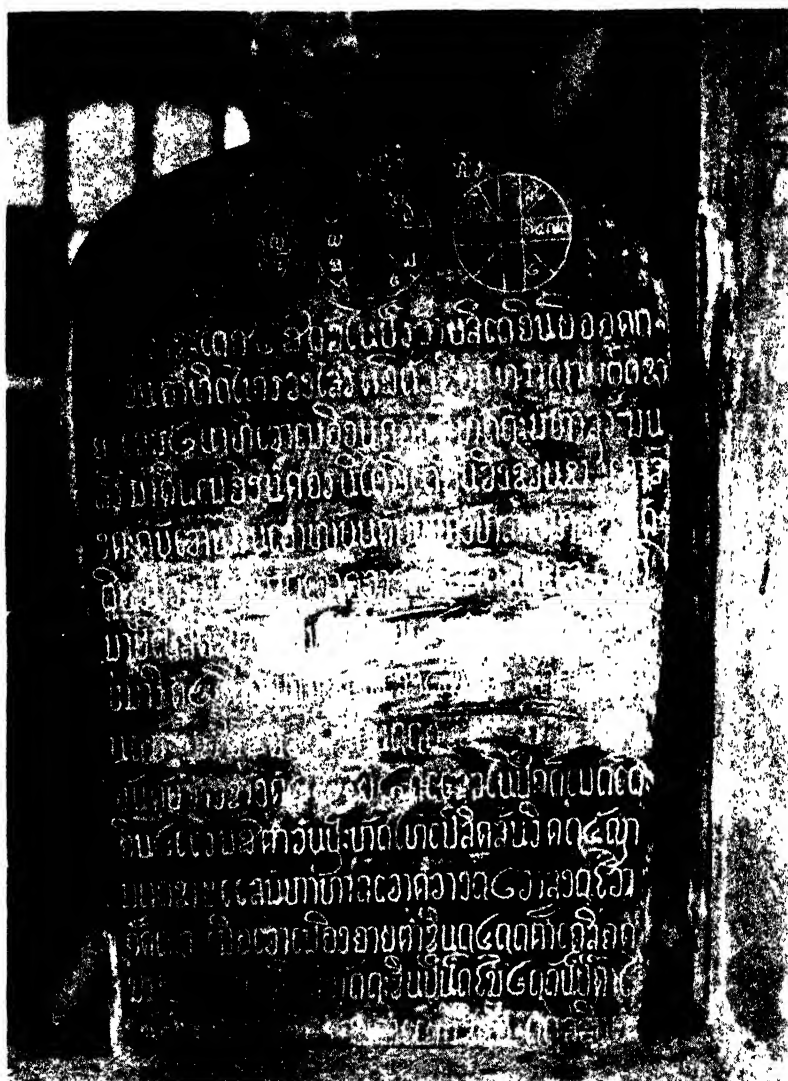
The principal temple in the city, or, as it is styled, 'Wât Lũang,' lies on the left, towards the northern gate, well secluded from the turmoil of life and shaded by tall, spreading banyan trees. As I walked there, the air in the gardens round it seemed charged with an indefinable spirit of peace. All noise was

¹ 'Wieng' = a fortified city.

hushed and one even trod more softly on the brown, bare earth, so as not to disturb the shades of those who guard the precincts. In the garden are set two large metal bells, to summon the priests to prayers, with inscriptions round the outer rim telling their date of manufacture—some fifty years ago. If chance should ever lead your wandering steps to Phayao and the Wāt Lūang, ring the smaller bell—the tone is wonderfully pure and clear.

In another corner I found a great stone votive tablet, two feet high and several inches thick, shaped like a gravestone with an angular top, and its face covered with an inscription in the old form of Siamese character, in vogue in the North in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, before the language took its present shape. I spent some time trying to make them out, but they were too worn and covered with verdigris to be readable. On my return to Lampāng, I heard that a similar tablet had been dug up near Lamphūn during the railway excavations, and was then on view at the Government offices in Lampāng. The script was identical and had been deciphered as being a dedicatory stone to some family of a period some four hundred years ago. I have seen a third since, dated 858 C.S. (A.D. 1496), set up in the old temple at Lampāng Lūang, which is illustrated in this book. The letters are called in the North 'Tūa Fāk Khām,' or 'Tamarind-pod' letters, as they are supposed to bear that shape. These tablets, therefore, form an interesting link in the history of the Siamese alphabet.

Inside the temple there was not a soul, and I was presently at leisure to examine the frescoes, with which the walls were covered. Many of them were sufficiently well painted, and perhaps of some age, depicting scenes from the Siamese version of the famous Indian epic, the Ramayana, but others struck such a note of incongruity as to give one a feeling of impatience—soldiers in red coats carrying rifles, or others in the grey-drill uniforms, puttees and forage caps which the Siamese military wear to-day. It is a little dispiriting, after following the story of some beautiful maiden, wooed by some handsome prince, and finally dying of love at her parents' feet, the whole scene artistically drawn with a full regard for costume and atmosphere, suddenly to come upon serried ranks of modern soldiers with peculiar looking guns. And below these such grotesque and hideous shapes as never I saw till then—almost life-size figures of Chinese, and other men, some of them painted as black as ink. These last puzzled me, for the good people of Phayao had no knowledge of negroes; but when I asked who they were



TYPE OF MEMORIAL STONE TABLET, WITH INSCRIPTION, FOUND IN NORTHERN SIAM. *This one is dated C.S. 858, equivalent to A.D. 1496.*

supposed to be, I was told by the priests that they represented Shan and Khămū. This made me smile, for though the latter are certainly darker than the Lao, yet I never thought to see them painted black, as we in our ignorance paint the devil. It was possibly meant as a sign of contempt for their northern and eastern neighbours.

As I returned to the 'Sālā' that evening, I came upon two of my elephants, which had been hobbled and let loose to fodder, crossing the road in front. They did not recognise me at first, and with vast upheavings of the body rumbled into the bushes which lined the road on either side. Then, turning round and seeing no one but their master, they gracefully waved their trunks in token of recognition and bowed politely as I passed by. What graceful creatures they are, and how different from the fat, ungainly, imbecile, hoggish buffalo. To see an elephant, with its noble proportions of ears, trunk, limbs, and body, entering a gate, climbing and descending some steep and rocky forest path with all the daintiness of a high-bred lady, is a constant source of pleasure; or to watch it at play, airily throwing sand over its back with its trunk (as it loves to do), or at dinner-time tearing the heart out of a succulent banana shoot. You have only to look at the twinkle in its eye as you place a good round orange into the curve of its trunk, to know that you have made another friend. But a buffalo! One cannot look at it without a feeling of repulsion. Here comes one, even as I write, along the lane by the side of my house—one of the pink tribe, with its great fat body far too heavy for its stumpy legs, its head almost touching the ground, with sleepy, vacuous eyes, and hideous, upturned snout. Yet it can move with remarkable speed, when roused. It is hardly credible that that cumbersome mass of flesh should be able almost to outstrip a pony—but cases are known where buffaloes have actually charged men riding, and the latter have been hard put to it to keep out of harm's way. And yet it is a wholly pleasant sight (to be seen in this country where you will, north or south, east or west) to watch a tiny child, in Nature's dress and armed with a short cane, sitting astride the buffalo's back, and thumping its sides with puny thwacks as he drives it home to its byre. And that same fat, hideous, old buffalo has its uses, too; the countryman would be in a pretty fix without him. He is, in fact, the basic coin of the realm.

One evening I was wandering through the city's streets when I caught sight of a little glistening spire some distance away among the trees. When I reached the spot, I found it belonged

to a dazzling white pagoda just newly finished and hard by a party of masons building a new temple on the site of an ancient Wat. I talked with the Head Priest, who was looking on, and tried to answer as well as I could his questions about the Christian religion, in which he seemed much interested, and the vital differences which distinguished it from Buddhism. He seemed pitifully anxious that I should say that it was not so hard to follow as the Teachings of the Buddha; but when he found that I could not do this, we both agreed that each had its own great difficulties, and that whether they differed in doctrine or as to the ultimate end of the soul, every good deed done in the cause of either found its own reward. In any case, the ethical teachings of both were much akin, and it was equally hard to follow the straight and narrow path, whether of Christianity or Buddhism. He deplored the falling off of religious feeling among the people at large, and pointed out how few the people were who built temples nowadays, when "sins were so many and saints so few." Even he, an old Buddhist priest of Phayao, spoke of the lightness of the age, much as an old Padre might at home, but I think, in the matter of the temples, he had forgotten that the majority of those of olden times were not voluntarily built, and certainly not voluntarily paid for by private individuals.

He had some smattering of geography, too, and asked about the people of Atrica—he was astonished to hear that the inhabitants were black—jet black, not brown like himself and his fellow Lao. I am not sure, however, that he knew where Africa was, or that he believed my statement wholly, but he hid his feelings, as they all do, and, when I bade him good-bye, thanked me courteously for the conversation we had held.

I am sure, if the good Father Marini had been present, he would have made an exception in favour of the old Lao priest, so modest and gentle, and yet so firmly anxious to keep and guide others to the true way of life. And that night, my mind was so engaged with thoughts of our respective religions, that I had some ado to listen to the teller of tales, who came, as ever, fresh to his task, and unfolded for our delight

THE STORY OF UTĂRĂ, AND THE RICH MAN'S TWO WIVES

Once upon a time there was a rich man, who had two wives. The 'mia noi'¹ was a ghou!; the 'mia luang' was not.

One day the rich man decided that he would like to fish in the lake near by. So he said to his wives, "To-morrow we will take the boat and go fishing. Each of you will bring a fishing basket with you."

So they set out on the morrow, and the 'mia noi' sat in the bow of the boat while the 'mia luang' sat in the stern. The husband sat between them and fished.

Before they started out, the rich man promised that he would share the fish he caught equally between both of his wives, and presently their baskets were overflowing. The greedy 'mia noi' soon devoured all the fish in her basket, so that it was empty, but the 'mia luang' ate none, so that her basket remained full. Then the cunning 'mia noi' said to the 'mia luang,' "I am tired of this seat, would you be good enough to change places with me and let me sit in the stern?"

Not knowing that the 'mia noi' had eaten all her fish or that she was a ghou!, the 'mia luang' agreed to exchange places, and about this time dusk began to fall. So the husband said to his wives, "It is nearly dark now; we had better go back home. But before we go, bring me your baskets, so that I may see if the catch has been small or large."

So each produced her basket for him to see. Of course the 'mia noi's' basket was full, while in the 'mia luang's' basket there were no fish at all, not one single little one.

Then the husband grew very angry, and said to the 'mia luang,' "You are a ghou!." But his wife stoutly denied it, and pointing to the 'mai noi,' said, "She is the ghou!, your lesser wife, for she by cunning persuaded me to change her basket with mine."

This the rich man refused to believe, and lifting an oar killed the 'mia luang' by cutting off her head with one blow. The 'mia luang' and her head were thrown into the lake, and the husband and the 'mia noi' then returned home.

Now each of the wives of the rich man had a daughter. The 'mia luang's' daughter was called Năng Utăă, while the other's name was Năng Khăm; and as the rich man with the 'mia noi' reached the house, Utăă came running out to meet them; but, when she saw that the 'mia luang' was missing, she cried out,

¹ 'Mia noi' = lesser wife. 'Mia luang' = principal wife.

"Where is my mother, what have you done with her?" Her father answered very shortly, "I discovered that your mother was a ghou!—you little wretch—so I have cut off her head and thrown her into the lake." At that Utără burst out sobbing and ran away to hide. But the 'mia noi' was very jealous of Utără, and sent her every day to look after the cattle, and gave her all the hard work to do. So she tended the buffaloes by the lake.

Now in her next re-incarnation the 'mia luang' was born as a tortoise with a golden shell, and one day, as her daughter was weeping bitterly by the lake and calling out for her mother, she came out of the water in human form and told her the whole story of how badly she had been treated by the 'mia noi.' After this, every day the mother came out of the water and held converse with her daughter, saying, "I am innocent of all offence—they killed me out of spite."

It was not long before the 'mia noi' found out that the 'mia luang' had been re-born as a tortoise with a golden shell, and, as soon as she knew it, she sought means to kill her.

So she said to her husband, "I don't feel very well—if only I can get a tortoise out of the lake to eat I shall recover."

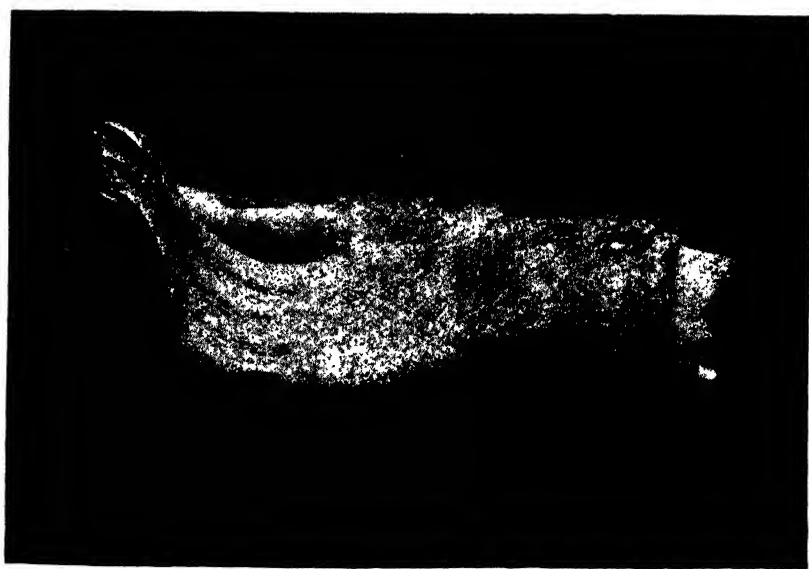
Her husband gladly assented and sent a servant to catch a tortoise in the lake; but Utără heard of the plan in good time, so when she went to tend her cattle, she cried out to her mother, "the 'mia noi' is anxious to kill you, and is sending a servant to catch you; if he searches for you by the banks of the lake, hurry off into the middle, and if he searches for you in the middle, hide yourself by the banks." The 'mia luang' listened to her daughter's advice, and when the servant came to catch her, she escaped from him every time.

Then the 'mia noi' grew angry, and said, "I am sure it is Utără's fault. She still sees her mother every day, and she is warning her against us." So when Utără had gone to look after the cattle one day, the 'mia noi' sent a servant to her saying, "You must catch the tortoise with the golden shell and bring it to me; if you don't, I will surely kill you, vile wretch that you are."

At that Utără became ashen pale, for she was afraid of death; so she went to the side of the lake and prayed to her mother that she would kindly die and so save her from a painful death. Her mother agreed and allowed Utără to seize and take her to the 'mia noi.' When the 'mia noi' saw her approach, she cried out, "Have you killed the tortoise? Well, put it into boiling water, and prepare a curry for me." Utără obeyed with a leaden heart, and then went out again to her cattle and sobbed aloud.



VOTIVE TABLET OF BUDDHA IN LEAD.



BRONZE HAND OF AN ANCIENT LARGE IMAGE, FOUND IN OLD CHIENG SÊN.
(From the author's collection.)

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As she was sobbing, a duck passed by and said, "What is the matter with you, maiden?" So Utără told the duck what had happened and begged it, if a chance occurred, to gather up and keep the bones of the tortoise for her.

The duck promised to do so, and, when the tortoise had been eaten, gathered up its bones and gave them to the house-dog to preserve. Presently Utără came back to the house and asked the duck where the bones were. The duck answered, "They are with the dog—he has kept them for you." So she went to the dog and received the bones and buried them near a tall tree. In due time the bones sprang up from the ground in the shape of a small tree with leaves of silver and gold. It was, of course, a magic tree and could not be pulled up by the roots. When the rich man saw it, he coveted it, and tried to pull it up. But he could not; so he sent for all the neighbouring villagers, and they also tried and failed. Presently Utără came back home from tending her cattle, so her father sent for her to pull up the tree. At once the roots gave way, and the tree came out of the ground; but as soon as Utără had pulled it up, Phya In flew down to earth, and, clasping both her and the tree in his arms, bore them off to heaven, there to take Utără to be his wife.

Utără remained with Phya In and bore him two children, and the tree grew with them, too. But the 'mia noi,' when she discovered that Utără was the wife of Phya In, was seized with jealousy, and desired that her daughter should become his wife instead. So she sent a servant with a message to Phya In's wife, saying, "Your father is ill, and would be very pleased if you would pay him a visit." Her intention was, of course, to kill Utără by some means or other. To this Phya In consented, and his wife came down to earth to visit her father. Then the 'mia noi' dug a deep trench and laid a broken plank across it as a bridge; in the trench she put a large cauldron full of boiling water. When Utără arrived, the 'mia noi' met her at the foot of the bridge and invited her to take off her god-like attributes,¹ so that they might meet as mortals. All unsuspecting, Utără did as she was asked, and then walked forward on to the bridge. But the bridge gave way beneath her weight, and she fell into the cauldron of boiling water and was killed. The 'mai noi' quickly gathered up Utără's wings and tail and gave them to Nāng Khăm, her own daughter, and told her to fly up to Heaven to meet Phya In. But when Phya In saw her, he became suspicious at once, and took Nāng Khăm to his children. They at once cried out, "This is not our mother—she

¹ These would be 'wings and tail' (cf. Lazybones).

is not beautiful, like our mother was." Then Phya In, to test her once more, ordered Nāng Khăm to give the children milk from her breasts. But when the children tasted it, they cried out again. "It is sour, this is not our mother—she is so ugly—this is not Utără." At last Phya In went out and looked at the little tree, and lo, it was withering away. Then he knew for certain that Nāng Khăm was not his true wife; so he slew her and put her into a bamboo sheath and sent her as a present to the rich man to eat.

When the 'mia noi' saw the bamboo, she said to her husband, "That vile wretch, Utără, lived with Phya In for many years, but she never sent us a single gift. But now that Nāng Khăm is his wife, she sends us a present at once." She did not know. So they fell to, but when the sheath was opened, and they saw the hands, the head, and the feet; then they realised that their child had been killed by Phya In, and the shock was so great that the 'mia noi' became mad. Shortly afterwards they both died in agony of mind and body.

But Utără after her death was born again as a human, and came out of an orange tree in the garden of an old couple. She grew up to be a very beautiful maiden, and the old man and his wife guarded her carefully. Presently Phya In, who was searching for his wife, learnt that she had been born again in an orange-tree in the old couple's garden, so he came to earth in mortal form, and, mounting on an elephant, rode up to the garden where the couple lived. When he arrived, he begged for a spoonful of water to drink; so the old man drew some water and gave him to drink; but Phya In declined to take it, and said, "Let your daughter come and draw the water for me; then I will drink." So the old man sent for the beautiful maiden, who drew the water for Phya In, but, as soon as he had drunk, he seized the maiden by the waist, lifted her on to his elephant and carried her off to Heaven. When he arrived, he showed the maiden to his children, and they cried out at once, "This is our mother, this is Utără, give us our milk from your breast." So Utără his wife was restored to Phya In, and they all lived happily ever afterwards.

This is the end of the tale of 'Utără, and the Rich Man's Two Wives,' as handed down by ancient tradition.

CHAPTER XIV

From Phayăo to Lāmpang

THERE is one matter which I have reserved for the final chapter of this book, and that is the coinage in use in the centuries past in the North of Siam. It is a subject of peculiar interest, for many types of coins are to be found, of all shapes and sizes, as will be seen from the two plates of illustrations in this volume, which represent the essentials of a collection made during my travels in the North.

In my monograph on 'The Coins of the Bangkok Dynasty, 1782-1924,' published by the Siam Society in January, 1925 (Vol. XVIII, pt. 3), I have already made a brief allusion to these peculiar lumps of metal. It had to be brief since very little reliable knowledge is available at present regarding them, and even the few remarks there made will probably require modification in the future when the subject is seriously attacked. In the meantime, this book would not be complete without some reference to these coins, and I propose therefore to describe shortly the different types that I have been able to discover up till now.

On Plate I two small 'bullet' coins, similar to ancient Ayudhyan coins, will be noticed under Nos. 15 and 16. Now it happens by good fortune that we are able to place these coins with some degree of accuracy.

In Volume I of the 'Records of Relations with Foreign Countries, (1600-1700),' published by the National Library in Bangkok, considerable light is thrown on the Northern money of the period in an interesting letter of instructions, dated August 27th, 1615, from Lucas Antheunis, the Agent of the English East India Company in Ayudhya, to Thomas Samuel, his sub-factor, who had then gone on a trading expedition to Chiangmai. In this letter Antheunis states that "The Janggamay (Chiangmai) tical is lesser than the Siam, for 100 ticals Janggamay weight but 85 Siams. Besides the Janggamay mint is baser in *value*, for 100 of those are worth but 75 of these in Siam, according to which computation we are to guide ourselves for that $424\frac{1}{2}$ ticals Janggamay *weight* (evidently the total of an account) is as above said in Siam 375 $\frac{1}{2}$."

It is difficult to follow the working of this sum in arithmetic

—which possibly was not a strong point of education in Elizabethan days—since, by the above standard of reckoning *weight*, 424½ ticals (Chiengmai) would be equal to 360½ ticals (Siam), and not 375½, as stated by Antheunis; but it is interesting to note that the Chiengmai tical had a greater admixture of alloy than the Siam tical, and was worth only $\frac{3}{4}$ of the latter, i.e. three ‘Salung’; and also that the bullet type of coin was in vogue in Chiengmai in the early years of the seventeenth century, probably introduced by the Siamese when they captured it temporarily in 1598.

Now the two coins shown in the Plate bear out the above data almost exactly, since No. 15 weighs 183 grains and No. 16, 187 grains, against an average 225 grains for the old Ayudhyan tical; and it certainly seems from their appearance as if they were not so free from alloy as the latter.

But we have still to account for the origin of this type of coin; why the Chiengmai tical was actually smaller than the Siam tical; over what regions of the North its use extended; and how long it remained in vogue. We cannot attempt to answer these questions now.

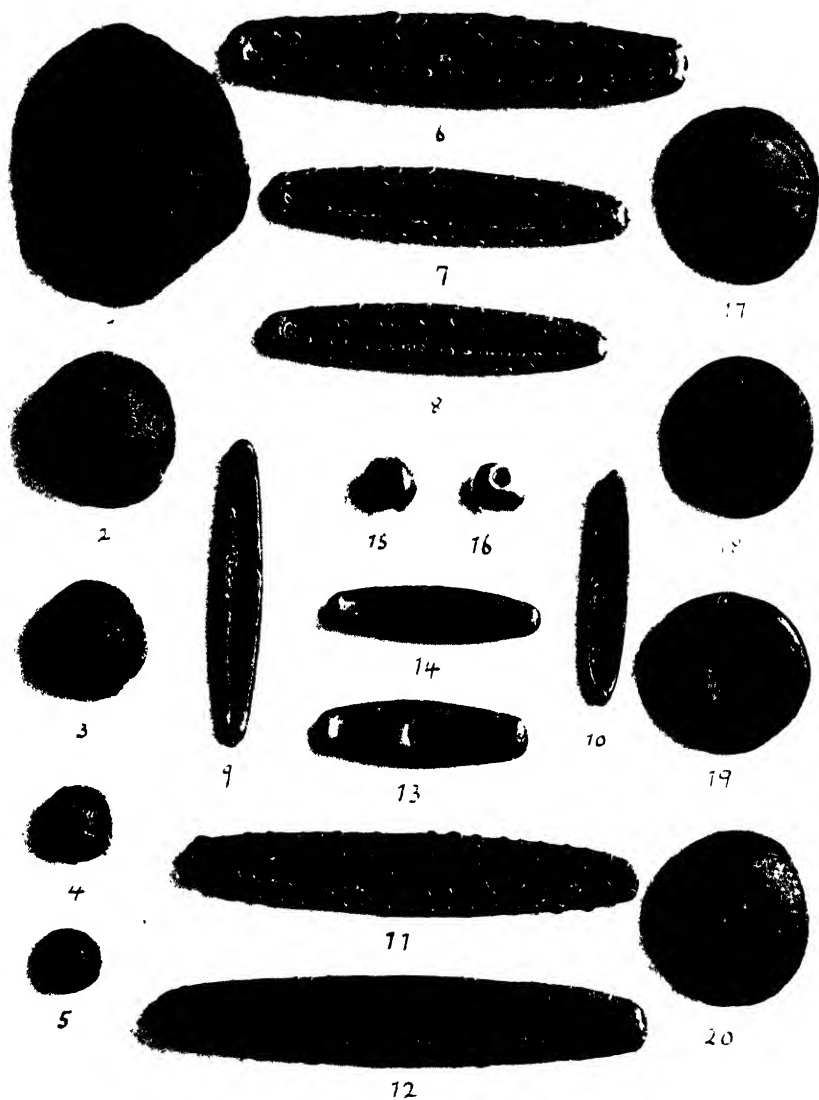
The origin of the bullet tical is still shrouded in mystery, though the late Sir William Ridgeway in ‘The Origin of Metallic Currency and Weight Standards (1892)’ certainly propounds an original and engaging theory, when he describes it as the outcome of a process of degradation from a piece of silver wire twisted into the form of a ring and doubled up, which originally formed some kind of ornament.

But, whatever the origin of the ‘bullet’ tical, its use in the North was probably in imitation of Ayudhya; and the barbaric, indigenous issues, as seen in the illustrations, have possibly more claim on our attention.

Nos. 1 to 5 of Plate I, which are called ‘Ngõn Hoi’ (i.e. Shell-money), or ‘Ngõn Tok,’ have already been referred to when discussing the questions of marriage and divorce in Chapter VI.

These coins are said, on good authority, to be in use solely for the payment of the ‘purchase,’ or the ‘release’ money of the lady, and are valued according to their weight. The set of five shown weigh 1,054, 501, 267, 106, and 63 grains respectively. These tokens are in general use in the North.

Nos. 6 to 14 of Plate I represent bars, some of which are stamped and others not, and may be said, roughly, to come from the valley of the Mêkhong, from the ‘Sip Sông Păn Nă’ down to the borders of Cambodia.



GROUP OF NORTHERN COINS. PLATE I.
(From the author's collection. Explained in the Text.)

Nos. 6, 7, and 8 appear to contain a certain proportion of silver. No. 6 is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, weighs 1542 grains, and is unmarked. Nos. 7 and 8 are $3\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and weigh 932 and 781 grains respectively; and are stamped in three places with a circle, inside which are two diameters at right angles to one another and four dots, one in each segment. This may possibly be intended to represent the 'Krūt,' or Garuda Bird, in a very primitive form, as it bears a striking resemblance to the rough presentation of that Hindu demi-god, as seen on the 'bullet' ticals of the Third Reign of the Bangkok Dynasty.

Nos. 12 and 11 appear to have no admixture of silver, but to be of copper only. They are $4\frac{1}{2}$ and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and weigh 1453 and 1200 grains respectively; and are each stamped in three places with a serpentine letter, or figure, the meaning of which, if any, I do not know.

Nos. 9 and 10 are of a different type, and are shaped like shallow dug-out canoes. They are of copper, and weigh 366 grains and 232 grains respectively. No. 9 is $2\frac{1}{2}$, and No. 10 is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. They are not stamped in any way. They are sometimes referred to as 'Lats.'

Nos. 13 and 14 are of a different type again, and are considerably scarcer than any of the other types of bar money. They appear to have a certain admixture of silver, and are stamped in three places, but the two examples shown are not exactly alike: No. 13 has an elephant in the centre, facing right; to the right, the 'Chakra' or 'Discus of Vishnu' (which is now one of the Royal Emblems of Siam), and an undecipherable mark to the left. No. 14 has also an elephant in the centre facing right; while to left and right are marks similar to each other, which may conceivably be characters of some kind, but which are not at present recognisable. No. 13 is 2 inches long and weighs 470 grains. No. 14 is also 2 inches long, but weighs only 377 grains, being of lighter build. I was told in the North that these two latter coins were issues of the Kingdom of Wieng Chăn on the Měkhōng, but I have as yet no evidence to prove this assertion.

All this copper money has a surface of plain, blank metal on the reverse.

The next three coins on Plate I, Nos. 17, 18 and 19, may all be considered together as they are all similar in structure, though not altogether in marking. They are convex on the marked side, and concave on the other, as may be seen from the illustrations, and for want of a better term I have called them

'leaf' money, principally because the marking on No. 18 closely resembles the veins of a leaf. No. 17, which weighs 870 grains, has apparently an admixture of silver, but the other two, Nos. 18 and 19, which weigh 552 and 671 grains respectively, seem to be entirely of copper. I only met with this type of money in the Nān region.

No. 20, the last coin on Plate I, is really a distant cousin of the 'Ngõn Hoi' or shell-money, but is differentiated by the fact that it has no shell. It is convex on one side and covered with 'chicken's blood,'¹ while the other side has a slightly ribbed, plain surface. There are no marks. This coin, which certainly has a good deal of silver in it, weighs 1049 grains.

On Plate II all the coins appear to be either of pure silver or nearly so.

First there is the series of peculiar shapes, Nos. 1 to 5, which Professor Ridgeway believes to represent the band of twisted silver wire that ultimately degenerated into the 'bullet' tical.

No. 1, the largest of the series, weighs 1880 grains (just over 8 ticals), and is stamped in four places, twice on each arm of the coin, with what appears to be the 'Chakra' or 'Discus.'

No. 2 has, on each arm, the 'Chakra' at one end, a scroll-figure at the other, and four ancient characters presumably spelling 'Sên,' an abbreviation of 'Chieng Sên,' between them. The weight of this coin is 984 grains.

No. 3 is a similar coin, but much more open in the centre, and with three characters reading 'Bāng' instead of 'Sên'; the other figures are similar in design but of a different style. This coin is lighter than No. 2, and weighs only 938 grains. In all probability, 'Bāng' is an abbreviation of 'Lūang Pra-Bāng.'

No. 4 shows specimens of No. 2 and No. 4 together. Their weights are 980 and 952 grains respectively. It may be stated frankly that in the north of Siam to-day these two coins are supposed to have been used in pairs, and to represent the male and female genital organs, by which they are known; and when I first started investigating the coinage system of the North, I thought it not improbable that such was the case, bearing in mind the well-known Chinese symbol, the 'Yin Yang,' in which two fish, one dark coloured and the other light, are joined together head to tail in one circle and represent the eternal forces of generation. But I am now satisfied that this is not so, and that probably the coins in question are merely of a similar type, issued by different Principalities—hence the slight divergence in shape and weight. It is, of course, possible that the use of

¹ Actually I believe. the burnt yolk of egg, but so-called in the vernacular.

these two shapes was a symbol of the union between Lūang Prabāng and Chieng Sên, which existed at one time. This type of coin can also be found with the names, Nān, Phrê and (Chieng) Rai stamped upon it, but they are all of great rarity. Even the 'Bāng' coins are very hard to come by. I have, however, recently seen a 'female' coin, weighing 948 grains, similar to the 'Bang' type, but with letters reading 'Kôn' stamped upon it. This may be an old abbreviation of 'Nakôn'; but even so, this does not help us much, unless it refers to Chiengmai, the 'Nakôn' or capital city.¹

No. 5 is the smallest of the series; it weighs only 157 grains, and is stamped in six places with a single character.

Nos. 6, 7 and 8 are another type of silver token, which has a certain affinity with the shell-money, being ribbed on one side and having shell-like cavities on the other. They also have their share of 'chicken's blood,' and altogether I am not disposed to regard them as having ever been in use as coins, more especially as they bear no marks of any kind.

No. 6 weighs 1066 grains, No. 7, 998 grains, and No. 8, a very small one, only 152 grains.

Nos. 9 and 10 are called 'Pig's Mouth' money, owing to a fancied resemblance to that ill-favoured animal. They appear more probably to have been made in imitation of a large cowrie-shell. Each of the specimens shown weighs 1195 grains, or slightly over 5 ticals.

No. 11 and Nos. 12 and 13 ought not rightly, perhaps, to find a place among these other coins and tokens, inasmuch as they are purely Chinese in origin. But they were found and purchased in Northern Siam, and are consequently worthy of record in this brief survey.

No. 11 is known to the Lao as 'Saddle-money,' and its shape certainly does convey the idea of a saddle. It weighs no less than 2926 grains (about 12½ ticals). I am told it comes from Yunnan Fu in Southern China, from which centre it was no doubt brought down into Northern Siam by one of the pack caravans which make their annual march southwards. It bears in Chinese the following inscriptions. In each of the three inset panels the inscription, which is the same, reads as follows:— 'Hong Kūng Tang Kee' (the name of the firm) and 'Kong Nghee Bun Ngôn' (genuine first quality silver). Each of the two columns guarding the central panel also has the same lettering, which runs:— 'Kong Nghee Kong Koh Thong Pao,'

¹ It is a curious fact that this type of coin is not known with the name '(Chieng) mai' stamped upon it.

which, I am given to understand, means 'Genuine silver money, negotiable for free circulation.' It is said to be of considerable age.

It looks therefore as if this were a kind of bank-note issued by the firm of Kūng Tang Kee; since, from its form, it is obviously intended as a token of value.

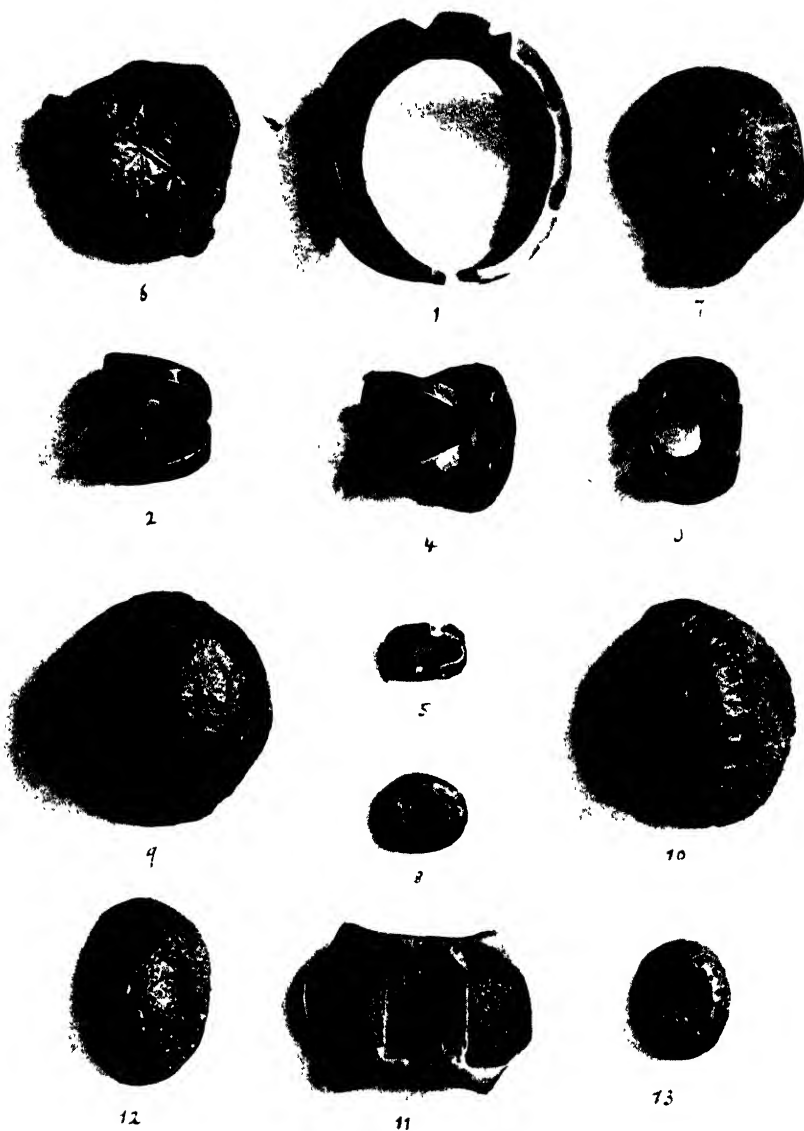
Nos. 12 and 13 are, of course, just lumps of 'sycee' silver, common to all parts of China, which are cut to definite weights at the caprice of the owner.

No. 12, the conical lump, weighs 1459 grains (6 ticals odd); while No. 13, which shows a definite cut, now weighs 498 grains only.

This completes the tale of the money-tokens shown in the Plates. It remains but to add that, in addition to these multifarious and grotesque pieces of metal, which in themselves may possibly not be exhaustive, cowrie-shells were in constant use by the peasant folk as small change, at a value ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 for the tical. Dr. McGilvary says that up to 1874 even salt was being used as currency for purchases in the Chiangmai market; but this expedient was doubtless of a temporary nature.

Enough has now been said to give the reader some idea of the complexity of the coinage question in the North of Siam, and the difficulties which await the student, seeking for light in the shape of reliable data on which to base conclusions. But before we finally leave the subject, it must be noted that for a good long time past the silver coin in use in the North has been the rupee as much as the tical. How exactly this originated is not clear, but the custom has been widely followed and encouraged by the teak companies working in the North of Siam, who have found it much easier and cheaper to pay their employees and contractors in rupees rather than ticals. The custom is now going out of use, as it is frowned upon by the Siamese Government (quite naturally), who for some years past have been taking steps to introduce Siamese paper-money and small change into the North and to stop the use of rupees altogether.

It is a difficult task, as I have already related, to introduce new money among the Lao, and for a number of years the use of paper-money hung fire. In Nān, I remember, a 10 tical note would only fetch 9 ticals in silver in the early days of its introduction, but now in most centres notes will pass freely from hand to hand at their full value. There is still, however, some difficulty with the small coinage, and in very few places can one get 100 satang (cents) for one tical. The amount varies as a rule between 93 and 96.



GROUP OF NORTHERN COINS (AND CHINESE.) PLATE II.
 (From the author's collection. Explained in the Text.)

But now we must leave the coins to look after themselves, and resume once more the story of our travels, which are nearing their end.

We stole out of Phayao in the early hours of a February morning, and, squeezing through the narrow southern gate, continued our journey along a good road, lined with tall, leafy trees, which spread a welcome shade.

Later on in the morning, while stopping to breakfast by the side of a stream, there suddenly came from the forest on my right a volley of shouts and cries, and then the bang of a gun, repeated twice. Almost at once a beautiful creature darted out of the undergrowth and shot up a tree like a flash of lightning, within a few yards of where I was sitting. With graceful leaps from branch to branch, it was soon out of sight. It was the size of a large cat, with a brownish-black, furry coat, white breast, and a long, black, bushy tail. It seemed to be a kind of flying-fox; but the Lao call it 'The Tiger's Mercury,' for they say that, wherever one is seen, there is a tiger lurking not far off. Hot on its heels came two Lao both with guns, but, seeing me sitting by the stream, they made off quickly into the forest again and did not stop for discussion. In point of fact, the shots had been much too close to my head not to leave an uncomfortable feeling behind; which feeling was by no means allayed when, a few minutes later, I was shown a tree which marked the spot where a Danish gendarmerie officer was shot during the Shan rising in 1902. Later on we reached the village of Băn Mê Kā, and there left the main road to cross a padi-field and make straight for the Bombay Burmah Company's camp at Mê Tăm Yai. The side road through which we passed was locally called 'Hell,' an apt name for four miles of broad, shadeless road, choked with dust, and with a merciless sun beating down at the end of a February morning. Kipling is right when he says, "There are only two things to be taken seriously in the East, the mid-day sun and acting allowances," and certainly the greater of these is the mid-day sun. They form, however, a good contrast, for the one tries to kill you, and it is only by the other that you manage to keep alive.

We met a few timber-carts on the road as we came, but the season was nearly over, and most of the teak logs ready for carting had already been put into the streams, to wait for the rise in the rainy season which would carry them down to the river Mê Yom and thence to Pāknapō and Bangkok.

What a difference the seasons make in the jungle. In the rains and the early part of the dry season Mê Tăm Yai must be

a beautiful forest of green, but now it was all parched and dry, and water would have been very scarce except that, near the house and hidden by screening banks, there was a dark pool of bubbling water, a spring coming, it was said, from some extinct volcano. This supplied a little brook which ran close by, and so the camp had always water at hand, even at the height of the dry season.

I have, in a previous chapter, referred to the Khămū foresters who are engaged for certain periods of time for all kinds of jungle work. These Khămū, who have no written language, are, apart from their knowledge of forest lore, a rather backward and primitive type, remnants of a race of very early settlers in the valley of the Měkhōng. I was surprised, then, to be shown by my kindly host valuable objects which many of them had purchased with money saved—ivory-handled swords, silver bowls, and large Karen drums—and were going to take back, when their contract was at an end, as presents for their parents or sisters.

The Khămū are a race, against whom unpleasant practices are often alleged, such as the eating of dog and snake; but the trait just mentioned is sufficient to show that there are very human feelings beneath the surface.

I stayed at Mě Tăm for three nights, longer than I had intended, but my elephants strayed far in search of fodder, and could not be found when the original time for departure came. They cost me a sixteen mile ride on a hot morning, for the truants were eventually found some eight miles away, browsing contentedly among the bamboos, and brought unrepentant back to camp. It is astonishing, the distance that elephants will travel in a night with their hobbles on, if fodder is at all scarce. Leaving Mě Tăm Yai, we struck a road going south-west to join the main road again at Pāng Sāk, and as we reached the crest of a hill came upon a large clearing covered with hundreds of teak-logs, of all girths and lengths, which would presently be shot down into the Mě Yuak stream two hundred and fifty feet below.

Soon after leaving the logs behind we came to another little forest knoll and, having climbed it, saw Pāng Sāk and the Mě Yūak at our feet. The Pāng (or Sālā) was already occupied, so we walked for half a mile down stream—over logs the whole way—and then, emerging from the stream, pitched our camp on a wide, open stretch of ground set below the road, with tall hills on either side.

The road from Pāng Sāk to Mě Ngao, our next stopping-place, was sixteen miles long, but it proved to be a singularly

hot, dull and dusty march, and we pressed on to our destination as fast as ever we could.

Mê Ngao, or Mŭang Ngao, derives its importance solely from the fact that the Anglo-Siam Corporation for many years had their northern headquarters there. In fact, the small town was almost entirely settled by their contractors and dependants, most of whom were Shan and Khamŭ. There was also, however, a small Lao population, cultivating rice and selling local produce from their booths in the market.

The name 'Mŭang Ngao' is an interesting one, for it means in Lao 'the foolish city,' and, as I asked the reason for it, I scented a legend in my informant's eyes. In olden times, so the story runs, long before the birth of the Buddha, seven of the villagers invented the game of tobogganing. For this purpose they cut down a number of bamboo poles, and, having split them in half, lashed the halves together in the form of a raft. They took the raft to the top of a hill, and, four of them having taken their seats, their other three friends gave the raft a friendly push, and down the adventurers went. But alas, there was no soft snow to fall into, only a hard, dry, rocky river-bed, and those four adventurers went to their destruction. Presently, as they did not return, the other three went down the slope to find out what had happened. When they had gone half way down, they saw the four forms lying side by side with some red matter flowing from their mouths, and they said to one another, "They are resting now and chewing betel, see the red juice on their lips; let us take the raft and enjoy our ride, even as they." So, without casting any further glances at their friends, they fetched the raft and took it up the slope once more, and having placed it at the extreme edge of the ridge, took their seats. Then with a push behind from a pole, down went the raft again and shot its human freight into eternity, as voluntary offerings on the altar of idiocy. Thus the people of Mê Ngao earned the title of 'foolish,' yet they might perhaps have righted themselves in the eyes of the world, had not the Lord Buddha himself, at a later date, set his seal upon the name. It is recounted that, after the Teacher left Phayao, he journeyed south in the form of a deer, but, being pursued by a Hô, he changed his form to that of the Buddha again, and took rest beneath a large mango tree. The spot is known to this day as 'Môn Talai' (the deer's couch), and the mango-tree is still pointed out; indeed, a pagoda has been erected in its shadow. The Buddha, when he transformed his body, took on a greater form than that of a normal man, and presently a woman, happening to approach near the

tree, ran back shrieking to her home, saying that a giant had taken possession of the village. In fear and trembling an assembly was held, and the elders went forth with their pigs and cattle and all their worldly possessions to present to the giant as a peace-offering. But the Buddha refused their offerings, saying that he was not a giant come to slay, but the Buddha, come to teach the Way of Life. Yet they would not believe, and continued to offer up presents and prayers, until a widow, whose husband had recently died, believed in him and brought him an offering, just of flowers. Then said the Teacher, "Thou art a wise woman with eyes that can see, but these are fools, let them be called 'the foolish people' "; and so they are called to this day.

After a three days' stay in Mê Ngao, we set out on the last stage of our travels, from Mê Ngao to Lampāng, a distance of some sixty miles. This journey can in ordinary circumstances be done in four days, but the hot winds were beginning to blow, and the brain-fever bird to utter its wearisome piping call at nights—a sure sign that the hot weather was upon us. So I determined to take matters in easy fashion and spend five days on the road. For two hours in the early morning, as far as the Shan village of Bān Hūat, we passed through thinly-wooded forest, but, after leaving the village behind, we went through a tract of country, every inch of which suggested tiger—tall, yellow jungle-grass, as at Chieng Sên, with a shallow pebbled stream winding through it from side to side and here a rotting log, there a clump of thick bushes. I discovered later, indeed, that only a week before, in this very district, a party of Shans driving a string of ponies had been attacked in broad daylight by two tigers, which had seized and carried off two of their animals. For two hours or more we passed through this grassy jungle, until a turn of the stream brought us to Hué Tāk and the Sālā built on the side of a slope.

The change of the seasons was becoming very noticeable. When I left Lampāng in early November all the forests and hills were a mass of vivid green, with the streams full of clear and sparkling water; but now there was hardly a trickle in them, and the trees of the forest were leafless; even the bamboos were almost bare and a dull yellow brown. Yet though the trees were bare, they were still attractive, reminding one of autumn tints at home. Nearly all had a silver gleam, and here and there clusters of red flowers and berries showed up clear against the stripped branches.

From the 'Sālā' at Hué Tāk we followed the path through a

bamboo forest practically the whole way to the next rest-house at Chămpué. In November it would have been scarcely possible to see the light of day through the thick bamboo clumps, but in February the branches were stripped and the ground covered with a brown carpet of withered leaves. In many places great black patches of charred leaves showed where the grim sun had done its work and set the forest ablaze, and in the hearts of several trees one could see the fires still smouldering. The mid-day heat was becoming intolerable and seemed to descend upon one almost in bodily form, like some ponderous weight. It was all the more noticeable, for during the previous week the temperature in the shade had shown a range of thirty-eight degrees, from 54° F. by night to 92° F. at noon.

There was a little felled timber lying in the jungle ready for carting, but no sign of man except here and there some solitary wayfarer passing through to Mê Ngao and the North. One I remember, for I made a joke in the vernacular at his expense which actually raised a laugh among my following—a pretty difficult thing to do, I may tell you. The man we met was armed to the teeth with gun, and sword and knives, and of a villainous cast of face; so I turned to one of my men and said, "That man looks like a dacoit." But he answered that the man was only going to 'Kā kai' (to trade). Whereupon I made the retort, "Kā kai kōh dee, kā kōn kōh dee," accompanying it with a shrug of the shoulders. It is merely a play on words. 'Kā kai' means 'to sell goods,' and 'kā kōn' means 'to kill people,' 'kā' having several meanings in Siamese.¹ So there you have it: "Out to trade or out to kill." It went down splendidly with the men, who were very pleased—perhaps you will think, too easily.

For some time before we arrived at Chămpué we had to climb a steep, rocky pass through the hills, and the evergreen jungle and the shade brought back memories of the forest paths between Phrê and Nān. The 'Sālā' at Chămpué, which was built a short time ago as an act of merit by a Burmese contractor, was well built of seasoned wood, the rooms were large and airy, and there were out-houses and stables attached—quite a model for rest-houses in the North. Chămpué itself could hardly be called a village, for it merely consisted of a few shops in the clearing, facing the rest-house, and one left and entered the forest again within the space of a hundred yards. In the early morning we had to spend a quarter of an hour trying to corner the smallest and most mischievous of the elephants, who ran

¹ According to the class of the consonant (high, middle, or low), and the character of the diacritical accent.

away from her mahout as soon as she had finished her bath. Fortunately she could not go far, as behind the 'Sālā' were high cliffs, and we finally ringed her in. She had had her run and came quietly enough in the end, but she was a curious animal, never happy unless trying to throw her howdah off, with the baggage in it, or else landing playful kicks at her mahout's stomach. She never quite achieved her aim, but the man was always showing me cuts and bruises which she had caused.

Leaving the 'Sālā,' we dived straight into the forest again, and travelled through similar country to that of the day before. We passed many caravans of bullocks laden with baskets, going to Lampāng and the villages near by from Mē Ngao, owing to a shortage of the local crop. Of all the centres I passed through, the Phrē and Lampāng districts were the only ones which could not produce a reasonable crop. In Lampāng it is the same tale now year after year, and it seems as if much of the land must be worn out and unproductive.

As we passed through the forest I suddenly came without warning upon an old man in a tiny clearing engaged in a singular occupation. He was placidly smoking a pipe and spreading out on the ground to dry a large number of white circular wafers. I thought at first that he must be a wizard, weaving spells, a natural object enough in a forest far removed from any human habitation, and I hesitated for a moment to speak to him for fear I might suddenly become a bird, or a dog, or something equally inconvenient. But eventually I plucked up courage to do so, and he told me that the white wafers were sweet potatoes, which he had dug up in the jungle, cut into slices and hung out to dry. Presently, when quite dry, they would be dipped in water and placed, one above the other, in a basket receptacle, and then sealed down. Finally, when they had been kept six months or so, and were quite 'ripe' (the word he used), they would be taken out and eaten with relish as biscuits. I am not sure he wasn't a wizard after all.

When we eventually reached the rest-house at Chām Kā we found it occupied by some thirty peasants, and so we pitched our tents by the side of a tiny stream, some distance further on. The place was said to be infested with tigers, and in the middle of the night we were all roused by the elephants screaming and trumpeting, and bumping their trunks on the ground. We lit a number of flares and crossed the stream to see what was happening; arriving just in time to hear some heavy animal bounding away and crashing through the thickets around us—evidently a tiger on the prowl, which we had disturbed.



THE OVERBROOK HOSPITAL AT CHIENG RAI, BUILT BY THE
AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN MISSION.



THE POLO GROUND AT CHIENGMAI.

Chăm Kā proved to be almost on the edge of the forest, for an hour's walk the next morning brought us into the open rice-fields. At that early hour everything was wrapt in a soft, hazy mist, and being somewhat ahead I stopped and watched the elephants come looming out of the distance, marching steadily in single file; they passed so close by me that I could almost touch their trunks, dipped daintily down the side of a deep ditch, and then up again and on, swishing their tails in lazy rhythm. The rice-fields came to an end and we found ourselves of a sudden walking along the banks of the river Mê Wāng; and we could, indeed, have reached Lampāng that day, but it would have made a long day's march, and I wished also to see the famous temple at Sădēt, which was close at hand.

The temple stands at the back of a grassy sward, shadowed by a great banyan tree behind it. Its setting does not show it off to full advantage, it seems somewhat tucked away, and to find the entrance one has to approach it sideways. Though not so beautiful as Wăt Chă Heng at Năn, it must be one of the largest temples in the North, and is a very important one. Every year at full moon of the fifth lunar month, according to northern reckoning, a great festival is held at Sădēt, lasting five or six days; and special visits have been paid to it by his late Majesty, when Crown Prince, in 1905, and also by Her Highness the Chao Dără, a Consort of King Chulalongkorn, and a daughter of the late Chief of Chiangmai.

Within the walled square, which encloses the temple and its precincts, rises first a pagoda with a gilded spire, then comes the main hall of worship, high and spacious, but with open sides; and on either side a small chapel. Beyond, in the courtyard, are two massive bells of bronze. The whole is well preserved and forms a good example of northern architecture, but on the whole a little disappointing after Lampāng Lūang.

Of the origin of the temple or of the name of the place I could gain nothing but vague details, nor did the people seem to know why the village was called 'Sădēt.' The priests spoke of it as being the same as 'Sét,' which means 'finished,' inferring that this name was given to the village when the temple and pagoda were finally completed; but this inference seems improbable, and it is more likely to refer to the Buddha's legendary pilgrimage, for 'sădet' is a royal word meaning 'to proceed' or 'to go.' If not, it must refer to some ancient king, who either ordered the building of the temple, or paid some famous visit to it.

We were invited to spend the night in the big 'Wīhān,' or

assembly hall, which is not so strange a proceeding as it may seem, for most temples in Siam, at any rate in the provinces, are open to travellers as rest-houses, and you may spread your camp bed on the cement floor with the certain knowledge that no one will disturb you or question your honesty of purpose. Only you must put your head beneath the Buddha's care, and not turn your feet towards the altar.

We had only some ten miles to go on the morrow, and as we left the temple at dawn I could feel a kind of suppressed excitement among the men at the thought that, after nearly four months of continual wandering, they would at last see their wives and children again. The elephants also realised the nearness to home and to freedom from heavy, uncomfortable howdahs, and stepped forward with a jaunty air. I myself had to confess to a certain feeling of relief at the thought of a house to sleep in once more, and of a more spacious and comfortable bed. The air, too, was growing hot for travelling, and I had noticed that for some days past the spirits of the men had sunk very low. But as we drew nearer Lampāng, step by step the old buoyancy of spirit asserted itself once again, and the last two miles was almost a race. We followed the banks of the Mê Wāng for several miles; then, passing through villages more and more populous, we gradually reached the outskirts of the city, and finally drew up at the gates of the Vice-Consulate as the clock struck half-past ten.

Epilogue

DEAR READER, we have come to the end. And you, who are sitting by your winter fireside, with the curtain drawn and the cold north wind shut out, and have just put down the book, where has your spirit been the while? With your body, still in its western home, or with me, wandering through this enchanting, eastern land? Can you close your eyes and see the evergreen jungle, with its deep ravines, its gigantic, mysterious tree-ferns, its parasitic growths coiling themselves round the smooth tree trunks, its myriad insect life, its running, rocky streams and fairy-like waterfalls? Can you hear the tiger's snarl, or the hoopoe's call? Can you see the 'tawny,' smiling Lao, whose cheerful countenance and independent mind cover a multitude of minor human failings, pitching a tent or saddling a horse, or playing on his banjo those plaintive airs he loves so well, or climbing on to his elephant's neck by the route of the latter's bended knee? Can you see the Lao girls, with their pretty faces framed in coils of coal-black hair, and their supple bodies draped in 'sîn' of variegated hues? Can you see the waving fields of golden rice, burning in the tropical sunlight and fringed with lines of tall and stately palms, through which the houses of the villagers peep? Can you see the flowing lines and graceful spire of the Lao pagoda, and the nāga-tipped, heavy, tiled roof of the temple-hall, the whole in its still, leafy garden setting? Can you see the fat, ugly old buffalo, the real basic coin of the Far East, wallowing in the mud, or lumbering across the field with its snout nearly touching the ground, and the smallest of naked children sitting astride its ponderous back, guiding it where he will? Or the majestic elephant, the very acme of dignity, come glistening black from his bath in the stream, or dusting his back, in airy fashion, with a coconut-leaf held in his trunk? What more can you conjure up? What other picture can we throw on the screen? The long stretches of high green-clad hills; the mighty rivers, flowing, some from the hills of Siam, some from the lakes of far-off Thibet, but all finding their way at length to Far Eastern Seas; the long, romantic caravans of mules and ponies bringing down the products

of China from the heart of Yunnan; the teak forests, and the masses of seasoning logs jammed at low water on the river rapids.

Yes, and many more such sights which serve to make this country of the Lao, if not the Promised Land, yet one which grows dearer to the heart, the more one knows it, and the stranger feel that, if he must be exiled from his own native shores, he could not find a land of greater charm and sympathy in which to spend his days. And now, Dear Reader, farewell—we have occupied the stage long enough—'tis time the curtain fell; so both my elephants and I will make our bow, and leave you to your dreams.



THE AUTHOR'S TRAVELLING ELEPHANTS MAKING THEIR FINAL BOW

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I
THE FOUNDING OF LAMPHŪN

Appendix to Chapter I

THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY OF LAMPHŪN

THERE are wonderful and beautiful tales still extant of the founding in the Shan States, and on the river Mēkhōng, of cities, which, if ever they did exist, have now disappeared from the face of the earth. Their names are unfamiliar and cannot be traced; and they can rouse but little interest in our minds. But of all the cities of Northern Siam standing to-day, the oldest is said to be Lamphūn, distant from Chiangmai some seventeen miles to the south-east; and the legend of its rise, and the story of its first Queen, which may have some foundation in truth, runs as follows, as told in the 'Annals of the North.'

Twelve hundred and fifty years ago there was a very old wizard, named Phrā Wāsū, living in deep seclusion among the mountains to the north of where Chiangmai now stands. His chief delight lay in the conjuring up of beautiful cities, and his hand and brain had grown cunning with age. One day, on coming down from his mountain cell, as was his custom, to bathe in the running stream which flowed below, to his surprise he found three pairs of children, each pair consisting of a boy and a girl, lying, the first in the footprint of an elephant, the second in that of a rhinoceros, and the third in that of a buffalo. What must the old man do but gather up all six infants and carry them off to his hidden retreat, there to care for them with the tenderness of a father. He fed them on milk produced from the fingers of his hands, until at length they grew up into beautiful maidens and handsome young men. Then he caused them to take one another in marriage, each pair as he found them at birth, and at the wave of his wand a noble city arose, in which they might live and multiply. Another couple whom the hermit already had by him, in case of need, were set to reign over them. This worthy couple had three sons, and so that all might share alike Phra Wāsū again waved his wand and two other cities appeared. When the father died, these three cities were shared among the sons, and for a time all was well. But soon in one of these cities a murmuring arose on account of a judgment given by the King.

It seems that a poor widow, falling on her knees in tears before the King, told how her son had cruelly abused and struck her, and prayed that he might be punished. But the King

refused to punish the son for striking his mother, and ordered the woman to leave the city. News was at once brought to the lonely hermit, musing on the success of his plans, of what the King had done; whereupon he ordered all the just and righteous folk to depart out of that city, and as the last honest fellow shook the dust of its streets from off his shoes, the King with his palace and beautiful gardens vanished beneath an overwhelming flood.

Having thus destroyed one city, Phra Wāsū must needs at once turn his thoughts to creating another, but this time an inspiration flashed through his mind not to trust to his own intuition, but to seek a consultation with a brother wizard, Phrā Sūkātān, who lived at the Court of the Cambodian¹ King of Lāwō.² So scratching with his stylus a message of brotherly love and affection upon a scroll of palm leaf, he encased it in a tube of stout bamboo, and set it afloat upon the river Mē Ping. We can picture the delight of Phra Sūkātān, quietly fishing on the banks of the river hard by his Master's palace, when, hauling up by chance a length of bamboo, he found inside a letter from his old friend, Phra Wāsū, and not only a letter, but also a tiny sprite, who popped out and explained to him the nature of the business for which his presence was desired. Phra Sūkātān at once sent the sprite back with a message to say that in seven days' time he would have much pleasure in coming north to meet Phra Wāsū once again and help him in any way he possibly could. At the time appointed he gracefully rose into the air, and alighting at a spot called Chieng Kreüng (or, 'the Halfway House') there awaited Phra Wāsū, who literally flew to meet him.

There was no doubt in the mind of Phra Sūkātān; the city must be founded on the spot where the inspiration had so happily come to Phra Wāsū. So off the two friends set, and on that hallowed spot, with the aid of magic circles drawn upon the ground, and the grouping of sea-shells inside them, there arose the city of Hariphūn Chai, now known as Lamphūn or Lamphūn Chai. This, we are told, took place in the year of the Buddhist Era 1206, equivalent to the year of grace A.D. 663.

As soon as the city lay before them in all its beauty, Phra Wāsū turned to his old friend and with a natural warmth of feeling exclaimed, "It's a fine piece of work, this city of ours, is it not, brother; but who is going to be its king?" Phra Sūkātān was ready, as ever, and suggested that, instead of a king, they should appoint a Queen of Hariphūn Chai, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of his Royal master, King Chākrapān.

¹ It is now certain that the King was Môn, not Cambodian.

² The ancient name for the city of Lopburi, in Central Siam.

of Lăwō. He drew such a delightful picture of the grace and charms of the Cambodian (actually Môn) Princess, that Phra Wāsū agreed at once, and sent off a young man, Kāwīyā by name, with a letter and presents to King Chākrapān, to ask that Chām Thēwi, his lovely daughter, might be sent to reign over Hariphūn Chai. In the meantime Phra Sūkātān bade farewell to Phra Wāsū and flew back home to advise his master of Kāwīyā's coming, so that he might be suitably received. It need scarcely be said that the embassy proved a great success. Asked by her father whether she was willing to leave her home and friends, and go north as Queen of Hariphūn Chai, the blushing Princess modestly replied that the Royal will was her will, and that the King had only to speak for his little slave to obey. Then the King agreed and, deceived by her demure and gentle manner, said that whatever she asked for, that he would give. To this rash offer the young lady does not seem to have returned so modest an answer as before, for she calmly asked for priests, astrologers, professors, doctors, craftsmen of all descriptions, and wealthy men, five hundred of each kind, so that the city might be well supplied! Her father appears to have been slightly embarrassed by his daughter's requests but, having given his word, issued the necessary orders and the lady's demands were fulfilled. No doubt Phra Sūkātān was able to assist in this matter, and indeed he must have been a very useful friend to have had by one's side. It is odd that the Princess did not ask for any ladies to accompany her, but perhaps they went as a matter of course, and were not considered worthy of record. I like to think at least that all the gentlemen who accompanied her were married men, and that their wives went with them. But, however that may be, Chām Thēwi obtained her priests and astrologers and doctors and professors and craftsmen of all kinds (not forgetting the wealthy men), and King Chākrapān gave instructions to Kāwīyā to conduct his daughter back to Hariphūn Chai and instal her there as Queen. A whole year was spent in making elaborate preparations for the departure from Lăwō, and then the Princess, having taken a tearful farewell of her father, stepped into her state barge, and the party set forth. Poling up the river Mênam Chao Phya past Mûang Khāntika (Chaināt), at Burrattha (Nakôn Sāwān) they entered its tributary, the Mê Ping, and leaving Bāng Pôn (Kamphēng-phet) behind, finally arrived safe and sound at Hariphūn Chai. In the meanwhile Phra Sūkātān had gone on ahead and, in company with Phra Wāsū, had made the necessary arrangements for Chām Thēwi's reception.

Three mystic words, borne on the breeze, caused a noble palace to arise from the ground, and in the twinkling of an eye a great concourse of townsfolk stood upon the banks of the river, all eager to welcome their Queen.

Phra Sūkātān remained to see Chām Théwi suitably installed in her new palace, and then flew back to Lāwō, to inform his master of the complete success of the undertaking, and to resume his normal course of life, not without a sigh of relief.

It would be romantic to be able to tell how Kāwīyā, that gallant youth, having wooed his Royal mistress as they idly journeyed up the river, whispering words of love as he lay at her feet, finally won her hand and fortune; but no such thing happened, for the chronicles say that the lady was married already, and had left a sorrowing husband behind.¹ In fact, soon after she arrived at Hariphūn Chai, she gave birth to twin sons, as like as two cherries and of wondrous beauty, to whom she gave the names of Mahāndā Yōt and Anāndā Yōt.

Such is the story of the founding of Hariphūn Chai (or Lamphūn, as it is now called), as given in the chronicles of the North, and I think we may assume that a daughter of the King of Lopburi did found a city in the North. At any rate, Chām Théwi has a fixed place in northern history, and it is said that she built many temples and established the Buddhist religion firmly in the districts of Lamphūn and Lampāng.

When the sons of Chām Théwi grew up to be men, their mother appointed Mahāndā Yōt to govern in her place as King of Hariphūn Chai. This did not please Anāndā Yōt, the other son; so he left that city and, journeying some forty-five miles in a south-easterly direction, founded the city of Khélāng on the banks of the river Mê Wāng.

Soon afterwards, his mother, Chām Théwi, decided to leave Hariphūn Chai and go and live with her son Anāndā Yōt. Whether she quarrelled with Mahāndā Yōt or not is not recorded, but it seems clear that her second son, having arrived at the years of discretion, was anxious not to have his mother living too close by his side, for he sought the advice of Phra Wāsū once more, and the old man, with many understanding nods, agreed to raise up another city, by the side of Khélāng, for Chām Théwi to live in. This was called Lampāng, which is the name still borne by the present city.

But it is not easy to say whether the present city stands on the site of the old one or not. 'Lampāng Lūang' or 'Great Lampāng,

¹ According to Professor Coedès, Chām Théwi was the *widow* of a King of Rahman Yadesa, i.e. the Môn country. If this is so, her sons were posthumous.

where is situated one of the finest temples in the North, is obviously of considerable antiquity, and is in fact held in great veneration by the Chief and townsfolk of Lampāng as an ancient site. Yet we are told that 'Khélāng,' the original city, was built on the banks of a river, as was natural, and Lampāng Lūang is not so situated. Possibly Lampāng Lūang is the 'Lampāng' which was 'raised up' by Phra Wāsū for Chām Théwi, the Queen Mother. Or possibly 'Khélāng' and 'Lampāng' occupied opposite banks of the river Mē Wāng, and there never was a city at Lampāng Lūang, but only a temple. It is difficult to conjecture now.

In any event, although we have been amusing ourselves with what we know to be legendary traditions, one cannot help feeling instinctively that, running through such tales, there is a substratum of truth and historical fact. The climate of the tropics, with its damp heat, is against the preservation of historical records, and not only palm leaves, but walls and roofs, fall to ruin far more easily than they do in the West. Roofs of timber often fall to pieces more easily than palm leaves, for I have heard of specimens of the latter, which have been pronounced to be more than five hundred years old. The oldest historical records in this country are those inscriptions on stone, which are occasionally dug up, usually in the form of memorial tablets of considerable size.

But certain essential and basic facts must linger long in the minds of village folk, handed down from generation to generation, especially when these folk have remained almost unmixed for centuries; and it is only natural that they should weave around their heroes' lives a fabric of magic romance. They are so much the more easily remembered.

These tales were in most cases recorded by priests, who were in those early days the only people who could write, being scratched on dried palm leaves with a stylus and put away in the chests of their monasteries. In later days the priests made paper of their own from the bark of a certain tree, 'Kāsā,' in a hand mould, of rough but very durable texture. I have in my possession a book in the Lū character dating from 1784, whose outer leaves show signs of wear and tear (as it has no cover), but whose inner pages are as tough and firm as on the day when they were made. Yet it has lain in the chest of a monastery in the tropics for a hundred and forty years—in a country where 'silver fish and moth doth corrupt, and white ants break through and steal.'

Now, although we know that Lamphūn, as a city of

importance, was founded by a Mōn Princess, still the origin of the legend is clear, for it breathes an unmistakable Indian air. Even the word for 'wizard' or 'hermit' in the vernacular tongue, 'Rū Si,' comes direct from the Sanskrit 'Rishi,' the Indian 'hermit-ascetic' of early Vedic times.

And although originally a 'Rishi' was merely a 'sage,' and was not credited with any supernatural powers, yet folk who live an ascetic life, and dwell apart from their fellow-men in mountain caves, will soon acquire a reputation for magic among primitive people, and become invested with powers beyond those of the ordinary mortal.

Moreover, whether the priests who wrote them credited these legends with any semblance of truth or not, no doubt their recital helped them to retain their power over the country-folk, and gave the latter a sense of unity in their existence.

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² Bulletin de l'Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient.

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C = City
M = Mountain

P = Province
R = River

S = State
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